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A COMEDY

In Four Acts

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THE
"MIND THE PAIN"
GIRL

A COMEDY
In Four Acts

By ARTHUR PINERO

LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

MCMXIII

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This play was produced in London, at the Duke of York's Theatre, on Saturday, February 17, 1912; in New York, at the New Lyceum Theatre, on Monday, September 9, 1912; and in Germany, at the Stadttheater in Mainz, on Monday, January 13, 1913



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THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

VISCOUNT FARNCOMBE

COLONEL THE HON. ARTHUR STIDULPH

BARON VON RETTENMAYER

CAPTAIN NICHOLAS JEYES

LIONEL ROPER

SAM DE CASTRO

HERBERT FULKERSON

STEWART HENEAGE

GERALD GRIMWOOD

CARLTON SMYTHE (*Manager of the Pandora Theatre*)

DOUGLAS GLYNN, ALBERT PALK, }
WILFRID TAYLOR, and } (*Actors at the Pandora*)
SIGISMUND SHIRLEY }

VINCENT BLAND (*A Musical Composer, attached to the Pandora*)

MORRIS COOLING (*Business Manager at the Pandora*)

LEIGI (*Maître d'hôtel at Catani's Restaurant*)

WAITERS

THE HON. MRS. ARTHUR STIDULPH (*Formerly, as Dolly Ensor, of the Pandora Theatre*)

LILY PARRADELL

JIMMIE BIRCH

GABRIELLE KATO

ENID MONCRIEFF

DAPHNE DURE

NITA TREVENNA

FLO CONNIFY

SYBIL DERMOTT

OLGA COOK

EVANGELINE VENTRIS

MRS. UPJOHN (*LILY PARRADELL's mother*)

GLADYS (*LILY's parlourmaid*)

MAUD (*LILY's maid*)

} (*Of the Pandora*)

The action of the piece takes place in London—at LILY PARRADELL's house in Bloomsbury, in the foyer of the Pandora Theatre, and again at LILY's house.

The curtain will be lowered for a few moments in the course of the Second Act.

The following advertisements are to appear conspicuously in the programme.

MIND THE PAINT (the complete song), words by D'Arcy Wingate, music by Vincent Bland, as originally sung by Miss LILY PARRADELL at the Paudora Theatre in the Musical Play of "THE DUCHESS OF BRIXTON," may be obtained from Messrs. Church and Co. (Ltd.), Music Publishers, 181 New Bond Street.

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THE "MIND THE PAINT" GIRL

THE FIRST ACT

The scene is a drawing-room, prettily but somewhat showily decorated. The walls are papered with a design representing large clusters of white and purple lilac. The furniture is covered with a chintz of similar pattern, and the curtains, carpet, and lamp-shades correspond.

In the wall facing the spectator are two windows, and midway between the windows there is the entrance to a conservatory. The conservatory, which is seen beyond, is of the kind that is built out over the portico of a front-door, and is plentifully stocked with flowers and hung with a velarium and green sun-blinds. In the right-hand wall there is another window and, nearer the spectator, a console-table supporting a high mirror; and in the wall on the left, opposite the console-table, there is a double-door opening into the room, the further half of which only is used.

In the entrance to the conservatory, to the right, there is a low, oblong tea-table at which are placed three small chairs; and near-by, on the left, are a

grand-piano and a music-stool. Against the piano there is a settee, and on the extreme left, below the door, there is an arm-chair with a little round table beside it. At the right-hand window in the wall at the back is another settee, and facing this window and settee there is a smaller arm-chair.

Not far from the fire-place there is a writing-table with a telephone-instrument upon it. A chair stands at the writing-table, its back to the window in the wall on the right; and in front of the table, opposing the settee by the piano, there is a third settee. On the left of this settee, almost in the middle of the room, is an arm-chair; and closer to the settee, on its right, are two more arm-chairs. Other articles of furniture—a cabinet, "occasional" chairs, etc., etc.—occupy spaces against the walls.

On the piano, on the console-table and cabinet, on the settee at the back, on the round table, and upon the floor, stand huge baskets of flowers, and other handsome floral devices in various forms, with cards attached to them; and lying higgledy-piggledy upon the writing-table are a heap of small packages, several little cases containing jewellery, and a litter of paper and string. The packages and the cases of jewellery are also accompanied by cards or letters.

A fierce sunlight streams down upon the velurium, and through the green blinds, in the conservatory.

[*Note: Throughout, "right" and "left" are the spectators' right and left, not the actor's.*]

[*LORD FARNCOMBE, his gloves in his hand, is*

seated in the arm-chair in the middle of the room. He is a simple-mannered, immaculately dressed young man in his early twenties, his bearing and appearance suggesting the soldier. He rises expectantly as GLADYS, a flashy parlourmaid in a uniform, shows in LIONEL ROPER, a middle-aged individual of the type of the second-class City man.

ROPER.

[To FARNCOMBE.] Hul-lo! I'm in luck! Just the chap I'm hunting for. [Shaking hands with FARNCOMBE.] How d'ye do, Lord Farncombe?

FARNCOMBE.

How are you, Roper?

GLADYS.

[To ROPER, languidly.] I'll tell Mrs. Upjohn you're here.

ROPER.

Ta. [GLADYS withdraws.] Phew, it's hot!

FARNCOMBE.

Miss Parradell's out.

ROPER.

[Taking off his gloves.] She won't be long, I dare say.

FARNCOMBE.

I've brought her a few flowers.

ROPER.

Have you? I've sent her a trifle of jewellery.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Glancing at the writing-table.*] She seems to have received a lot of jewellery.

ROPER.

[*Bustling across to the table.*] By Jove, doesn't she! Ah, there's my brooch!

FARNCOMBE.

[*Modestly.*] I didn't consider I'd a right to offer her anything but flowers, on so slight an acquaintance.

ROPER.

Exactly; but I'm an old friend, you know. [*Turning to FARNCOMBE.*] Perhaps, by her next birthday——

FARNCOMBE.

[*Smiling.*] I hope so.

ROPER.

[*Approaching FARNCOMBE and taking him by the lapel of his coat.*] What I want to say to you is, doing anything to-night?

FARNCOMBE.

I—I shall be at the theatre.

ROPER.

Oh, we shall all be at the theatre, to shout Many Happy Returns. Later, I mean.

FARNCOMBE.

Nothing that I can't get out of.

ROPER.

Good. Look here. Smythe is giving her a bit of supper in the foyer after the show, a dance on the stage to follow. About five-and-twenty people. 'Ull you come?

FARNCOMBE.

If Mr. Smythe is kind enough to ask me——

ROPER.

He *does* ask you, through me. He's left all the arrangements to me and Morrie Cooling. Carlton never did anything in his life; *I* egged him on to this. I've been sweating at it since eleven o'clock this morning. Haven't been near the City; not near it. Well?

FARNCOMBE.

[*His eyes glowing.*] I shall be delighted.

ROPER.

Splendid. Been trying to get on to you all day. I've called twice at your club and at St. James's Place.

FARNCOMBE.

Sorry you've had so much trouble.

ROPER.

[*Dropping on to the settee in front of the writing-table and wiping his brow.*] There'll be the Baron, Sam de Castro, Bertie Fulkerson, Stew Heneage, Jerry Grimwood, Dwarf Kennedy, Colonel and Mrs. Stidulph—Dolly Ensor that was—and ourselves, besides Cooling and Vincent Bland and the pick o' the Company. Catani does the food and drink. I don't believe I've forgotten a single thing. [*With a change of tone, pointing to the arm-chair in the middle of the room.*] Sit down a minute. [FARNCOMBE sits and ROPER edges nearer to him.] Are you going to wait to see Lily this afternoon?

FARNCOMBE.

I—I should like to.

ROPER.

Because if Jeyes should happen to drop in while you're here——

FARNCOMBE.

Captain Jeyes?

ROPER.

Nicko Jeyes—or if you knock up against him to-night at the theatre—mum about this.

FARNCOMBE.

About the supper?

ROPER.

[*Nodding.*] Um. We don't want Nicko Jeyes; we simply don't want him. And if he heard that you

and some of the boys are coming, he might wonder why *he* isn't included.

FARNCOMBE.

He strikes me as being rather a surly, ill-conditioned person.

ROPER.

A regular loafer.

FARNCOMBE.

He appears to live at Catani's. I never go there without meeting him.

ROPER.

Exactly. Catani's and a top, back bedroom in Jermyyn Street, and hanging about the Pandora; that's Nicko Jeyes's life.

FARNCOMBE.

He's an old friend of Mrs. Upjohn's and Miss Parradell's too, isn't he?

ROPER.

[*Evasively.*] Known 'em some time. That's *it*: Lily's so faithful to her old friends.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Smiling.*] *You* oughtn't to complain of that.

ROPER.

Oh, but I'm a *real* friend. I've always been a patron of the musical drama—it's my fad; and I've kept an eye on Lily from the moment she sprang into prominence—[*singing*] "Mind the paint! Mind the paint!"

—looked after her like a father. Uncle Lal she calls me. [*Reassuringly.*] I'm a married man, you know; [FARNCOMBE *nods*] but the wife has plenty to occupy her with the kids and she leaves the drama to me. She prefers Bexhill. [*Leaning forward and speaking with great earnestness.*] Farncombe, what a charming creature!

FARNCOMBE.

[*Innocently.*] Mrs. Roper?

ROPER.

No, no, no; Lily. [*Hastily.*] Oh, and so's my missus, for that matter, when she chooses. But Lily Upjohn——!

FARNCOMBE.

[*In a low voice.*] Beautiful; perfectly beautiful.

ROPER.

Yes, and as good as she's beautiful; you take it from me. [*With a wave of the hand.*] Well, if you see Jeyes, you won't——?

FARNCOMBE.

Not a word.

ROPER.

[*Rising and walking away to the left.*] I've warned the others. [*Returning to FARNCOMBE who has also risen.*] By-the-bye, if Lily should mention the supper in the course of conversation, remember, *she's* not in the conspiracy.

FARNCOMBE.

Conspiracy?

ROPER.

To shunt Nicko. We're letting her think there are to be no outsiders.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Becoming slightly puzzled by ROPER's manner.*] Why, would she very much like Captain Jeyes to be asked?

ROPER.

[*Rather impatiently.*] Haven't I told you, once you're a friend of Lil's——! [*Looking towards the door.*] Is this Ma? [MRS. UPJOHN *enters.*] Hul-lo, Ma!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*A podgy little, gaily dressed woman of five-and-fifty with a stupid, good-humoured face.*] 'Ullo, Uncle!

ROPER.

Lord Farncombe——

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Advancing and shaking hands with FARNCOMBE.*] Glad to see you 'ere again. You 'ave been before, 'aven't you?

FARNCOMBE.

Last week.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Of course; you came with Mr. Bertie Fulkerson. But somebody or other's always poppin' in. [*Pleasantly.*] Lil sees too many, *I* say. It's tirin' for 'er. Won't you set?

ROPER.

Lord Farncombe's brought Lily some flowers, Ma.
[To FARNCOMBE.] Where are they?

FARNCOMBE.

[*Who, after waiting for MRS. UPJOHN to settle herself upon the settee in front of the writing-table, sits in the chair at the end of the settee—pointing to a large basket of flowers.*] On the piano.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Barely glancing at the flowers.*] 'Ow kind of 'im!
Sech a waste o' money too! They do go off so quick.

ROPER.

[*Reading the cards attached to the various floral gifts.*] Where is Lil?

MRS. UPJOHN.

She's settin' to a risin' young artist in Fitzroy Street—Claude Morgan. She won't be 'ome till past five. So tirin' for 'er.

ROPER.

Never heard of Morgan.

MRS. UPJOHN.

No, nor anybody else. That's what I tell 'er. Why waste your time givin' settin's to a risin' young artist when the big men 'ud go down on their 'ands and knees to do you? But that's Lil all over. She's the best-natured girl in the world, and so she gets imposed on all round.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Gallantly.*] I prophesy that Mr, Morgan's picture of Miss Parradell won't have dried before he's quite famous.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Turning a pair of dull eyes full upon him.*] 'Ow do you mean?

FARNCOMBE.

[*Disconcerted.*] Er—I mean——

MRS. UPJOHN.

Why won't it 'ave dried?

FARNCOMBE.

I mean he will have become celebrated *before* it has dried.

MRS. UPJOHN.

'Is pictures never do dry, you mean?

ROPER.

No, no, Ma!

MRS. UPJOHN.

'Owever, it doesn't matter. 'E isn't even goin' to put 'er name to it.

ROPER.

Why not?

MRS. UPJOHN.

You may well ask. 'E's bent on callin' it "The 'Mind the Paint' Girl."

ROPER.

What's wrong with that? Everybody'll recognise who *that* is.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Unconvinced.*] 'Er name's printed on all 'er photos.

FARNCOMBE.

The first time I had the pleasure of seeing your daughter on the stage, Mrs. Upjohn, a man next to me said, "Here comes the 'Mind the Paint' girl."

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Cheering up.*] Oh, well, p'r'aps young Morgau knows 'is own business best. Let's 'ope so, at any rate.

ROPER.

[*By the tea-table, beckoning to FARNCOMBE.*] FARNCOMBE—

FARNCOMBE.

[*To ROPER.*] Eh? [*To MRS. UPJOHN, rising.*] Excuse me.

[FARNCOMBE *joins* ROPER, *whereupon* MRS. UPJOHN *goes to the writing-table and, seating herself there, examines the jewellery delightedly.*]

ROPER.

[*To FARNCOMBE, in a whisper.*] Do me a favour.

FARNCOMBE.

Certainly.

ROPER.

[*Looking at his watch.*] It's only half-past four. Take a turn round the Square. I've some business to talk over with the old lady.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Nodding to ROPER and then coming forward and addressing MRS. UPJOHN.*] I—er—I think I'll go for a little walk and come back later on, if I may.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Contentedly.*] Oh, jest as you like.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Moving towards the door.*] In about a quarter-of-an-hour.

MRS. UPJOHN.

If we don't see you again, I'll tell Lil you've been 'ere.

FARNCOMBE.

[*At the door.*] Oh, but you will; you *will* see me again.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Well, please yourself and you please your dearest friend, as Lil's dad used to say.

FARNCOMBE.

Thank you—thank you very much.

[*He disappears, closing the door after him.*]

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*To ROPER, looking up.*] I b'lieve you gave that young man the 'int to go, Uncle.

ROPER.

I did; told him I wanted to talk business with you.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Business? [*Resuming her inspection of the trinkets.*] This is a 'andsome thing Mr. Grimwood's sent 'er.

ROPER.

[*His hands in his trouser-pockets, contemplating MRS. UPJOHN desperately.*] Upon my soul, Ma, you're a champion!

MRS. UPJOHN.

Now wot 'ave I done!

ROPER.

Well, you might spread yourself a little over young Farncombe.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Spread myself! Why should I?

ROPER.

Lord Farncombe!

MRS. UPJOHN.

I treat 'em all alike; so does Lil. 'E's not the first title we've 'ad 'ere, not by a dozen.

ROPER.

No, but damn it all—! I beg your pardon——

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Beaming.*] So you ought—swearin' like a trooper.

ROPER.

This chap's in love with her.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Oh, they're all in love with 'er; or 'ave been, one time or another.

ROPER.

Yes, but they're not all Farncombes and they're not all marrying men. I'm prepared to bet my boots that if Lil and young Farncombe could be thrown together——! [*Sitting on the settee in front of the writing-table as Mrs. UPJOHN rises and comes forward.*] Here! Do talk it over.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Placidly.*] Where's the use o' talkin' it over? It's wastin' one's breath. [*Moving to the settee by the piano.*] My Lil doesn't want to marry—any'ow not yet awhile; she's 'appy and contented as she is. [*Sitting and smoothing out her skirt.*] When she does, I s'pose it'll be the Captain.

ROPER.

[*Between his teeth.*] The Captain! [*Quietly.*] Ma, the day Lil marries Nicko Jeyes, you and she'll see the last o' me.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Oh, don't say that, Uncle.

ROPER.

I do say it. The disappointment 'ud be more than I could stand. Selfish, designing beggar!

MRS. UPJOHN.

Now, no low abuse.

ROPER.

A fellow who gets on the soft side of Lil before she's out of her teens—before she's made any position to speak of; and when she *has* made a position, and *he's* practically on his uppers, sticks to her like a limpet!

MRS. UPJOHN.

She sticks to 'im, too. It meant a deal to Lil in 'er 'umble days, reck'lect—receivin' attentions from a gentleman in the army. She doesn't forget that.

ROPER.

[*Jumping up and walking about.*] It's cruel; that's what it is—it's cruel. Here's Gwennie Harker and Maidie Trevail both married to peers' sons, and Eva Shafto to a baronet—all of 'em Pandora girls; and Lil—*she's* left high and dry, engaged to a nobody! It's cruel!

MRS. UPJOHN.

She's not ackshally engaged.

ROPER.

Ho, ho!

MRS. UPJOHN.

The ideeer was, when 'e shirked goin' to India an' gave up soldierin', so as to be near 'er, that 'e should get something to do in London; *then* they were to be engaged.

ROPER.

[*Sarcastically.*] Oh, to be just, I admit he's in no hurry. He's been a whole year looking for something to do in London—looking for it at Catani's and at the Pandora bars!

MRS. UPJOHN.

'E 'as to be on the spot at night, to bring Lil 'ome after 'er work.

ROPER.

Exactly! And when a decent, eligible young chap comes along, and means business, he's choked off by finding Nicko Jeyes in possession. [*Stopping before* MRS. UPJOHN.] But, I say!

MRS. UPJOHN.

Wot?

ROPER.

Farncombe hasn't tumbled to it yet.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Indifferently.*] 'Asn't 'e?

ROPER.

Bertie Fulkerson's held his tongue about it; so have the other boys who're friends of Farncombe's. *They* see he's hard hit. [*Enthusiastically.*] Oh, they're good boys; they're good, loyal boys! There's not one of them who wouldn't throw up his hat if Nicko got the chuck. [*Suddenly.*] Ma!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Startled.*] Hey?

ROPER.

[*Dropping his voice.*] This little spree to-night at the theatre—Lil thinks it's to be merely among the members of the Company.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Ain't it?

ROPER.

[*Sitting beside her.*] You keep quiet, now. No, it isn't.

MRS. UPJOHN.

'Oo——?

ROPER.

The boys—and Farncombe.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Disturbed.*] Gracious! There'll be an awful fuss with the Captain to-morrer.

ROPER.

[*Snapping his fingers.*] Pishhh!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Rising and walking away to the right.*] 'E's so 'orribly jealous. When Lil tells 'im 'oo was at the party, there'll be a frightful kick-up!

ROPER,

[*Falling into despondency.*] Oh, I dare say I'm a fool for my pains, Ma. Nothing'll come of it. [*Rising and pacing the room again.*] Farncombe's as shy as a school-girl; he'd be on a desert island with a pretty woman for a month without squeezing her hand.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*In an altered tone.*] Uncle.

ROPER.

Hullo!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Thoughtfully.*] I shouldn't raise any objection, bear in mind, if Lil could be weaned away from the Captain and took a fancy to young Farncombe.

ROPER.

Objection!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Sitting on the settee in front of the writing-table.*] All said an' done, to be Lady F., with no need to work if you're not disposed to, is better than bein' Mrs. Captain Jeyes an' 'avin' to linger on the stage, p'r'aps, till you drop, to 'elp keep the pot a' boilin'. [*Opening her eyes widely.*] Lady F.!

ROPER.

[*Coming to her.*] And Countess of Godalming when his father dies.

MRS. UPJOHN.

I s'pose there'd be any amount of unpleasantness with the fam'ly?

ROPER.

[*Disdainfully.*] The family!

MRS. UPJOHN.

There's generally a rumpus in sech cases.

ROPER.

Why, Ma, these tiptop families ought to feel jolly grateful that we're mixing the breed for them a bit. Look at the two lads who've married Gwennie Harker and Maidie Trevail—Kinterton and Glenroy; and Fawcus—Sir George Fawcus—Eva Shafto's husband; they haven't a chin or a forehead between 'em, and their chests are as narrow as a ten-inch plank.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Quite true.

ROPER.

Farncombe himself, *he's* inclined to be weedy. I maintain it's a grand thing for our English nobbs that their slips of sons have taken to marrying young women of the stamp of Maidie Trevail and Gwennie Harker—or Lil; keen-witted young women full of the joy of life, with strong frames, beautiful hair and fine eyes, and healthy pink gums and big white teeth.

Sneer at the Pandora girls! Great Scot, it's my belief that the Pandora girls'll be the salvation of the aristocracy in this country in the long run!

[CAPTAIN NICHOLAS JEYES *lounges in. He is a man of about five-and-thirty, already slightly grey-haired, who has gone to seed. ROPER sits in the chair in the middle of the room rather guiltily and MRS. UPJOHN puts on a propitiatory grin.*

JEYES.

[*Nodding to MRS. UPJOHN and ROPER as he closes the door.*] Afternoon, Mrs. Upjohn. How'r'you, Roper?

MRS. UPJOHN.

Ah, Captain!

ROPER.

Hullo, Nicko!

JEYES.

[*Advancing.*] Lily not in?

MRS. UPJOHN.

No; she's in Fitzroy Street, settin' to Morgan.

JEYES.

[*Frowning.*] Why didn't she ask me to go with her?

MRS. UPJOHN.

Dun'no, I'm sure. She's took Miss Birch.

JEYES.

[*With a grunt.*] Oh? [*Looking round.*] Flowers.

MRS. UPJOHN.

'Eaps of 'em, ain't there?

ROPER.

[*Jerking his head towards the writing-table.*] Yes, and some nice presents over here.

MRS. UPJOHN.

She's beat 'er record this year, Lil 'as, out an' out.

[*JEYES goes to the writing-table and ROPER and MRS. UPJOHN rise and wander away, the former to the conservatory, the latter to the settee by the piano.*]

JEYES.

[*Scowling at the presents.*] Very nice. [*Picking up a case of jewellery.*] Ve-ry nice. [*Throwing the case down angrily.*] Confound 'em, what the devil do they take her for!

ROPER.

[*At the entrance to the conservatory.*] I may remark that one of those gifts is from *me*, Jeyes.

JEYES.

Oh, I'm not alluding to *you*.

ROPER.

[*Stiffly.*] Much obliged.

JEYES.

[*Coming forward and addressing MRS. UPJOHN.*]

I've called in to ask Lily whether she'll come out to supper with me to-night, to Catani's, to celebrate her birthday. Luigi's decorating a table for me specially. Mr. and Mrs. Linthorne'll come, and Jack Wethered. [*To ROPER.*] Are you free, Roper? [*Mrs. UPJOHN sits uneasily on the settee by the piano and ROPER finds some object to interest him near the tea-table.*] I suppose it's no good asking *you*, Mrs. Upjohn?

MRS. UPJOHN.

N-n-o, thank you, Captain, and I-I-I'm afraid——

JEYES.

Afraid——?

MRS. UPJOHN.

I'm afraid Lil can't manage it either.

JEYES.

Why not?

MRS. UPJOHN.

I—I'm surprised she didn't mention it to you 'erself when you brought 'er 'ome last night.

JEYES.

Mention what?

MRS. UPJOHN.

They're givin' 'er a supper to-night at the theatre.

JEYES.

The theatre?

ROPER.

[*Advancing.*] Yes, Carlton's standing a little spread

in the foyer, in honour of the occasion. [*Sitting at the tea-table.*] Quite right too; she's *his* best asset, and chance it.

JEYES.

When was it fixed up?

ROPER.

Late last night.

JEYES.

The fact is, Lily and I had a slight tiff coming home last night. [*Sitting on the settee in front of the writing-table.*] Ha! I suppose she kept it from me to pay me out. [*Sharply.*] Who's invited?

ROPER.

Er—only the principal members of the Company, I understand.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Moistening her lips with her tongue.*] Yes, only the members of the Company, Lil says.

ROPER.

With Morrie Cooling and Vincent Bland thrown in.

JEYES.

[*Looking at ROPER.*] You seem to know a lot about it, Roper.

ROPER.

I was behind when Morrie was going round to the dressing-rooms.

J EYES.

[*To ROPER, suspiciously.*] Are you asked ?

ROPER.

[*Taken aback.*] E—eh ?

J EYES.

Are you asked ?

ROPER.

[*With an attempt at airiness.*] Oh, yes, they've dragged me into it.

J EYES.

Since when have you been a member of the Company ?

ROPER.

No, but—dash it, I've done business for Carlton in the City for twenty years or more——!

J EYES.

That doesn't make you one.

ROPER.

And I'm an old friend of Lil's.

J EYES.

Not older than I. [*Violently.*] Why the blazes doesn't Smythe invite me ?

ROPER.

[*Extending his arms.*] My dear Nicko, I'm not

giving the party. Really, you do jump down a man's throat——!

JEYES.

Sorry, sorry, sorry. [*Leaning back and thrusting his hands into his pockets.*] Well, I'll put Jack and the Linthornes off. They don't want to sup with *me*; I shouldn't amuse 'em. [*Gazing at the carpet.*] Her birthday, though! It'll be the first time I shall have been out of *that* for—how many years?—six years. I—— [*Raising his head, he detects MRS. UPJOHN and ROPER eyeing each other uncomfortably.*] Anything the matter?

ROPER.

T-t-the matter?

JEYES.

[*Taking his hands from his pockets and sitting upright.*] Any game on?

MRS. UPJOHN.

Game?

JEYES.

At my expense?

MRS. UPJOHN.

I dun'no wot you're drivin' at, Captain.

JEYES.

[*Harshly.*] How long's Lily sitting this afternoon?

MRS. UPJOHN.

Till five.

JEYES.

[*Looking at his watch.*] What's Morgan's number in Fitzroy Street?

MRS. UPJOHN.

Sixty.

JEYES.

[*Rising.*] I'll fetch her.

[*As he makes a movement towards the door, it is thrown open and LILY PARRADELL enters with a rush—an entrancing vision of youth, grace, and beauty. She is followed by JIMMIE BIRCH, a petite, bright-eyed girl in an extremely chic costume.*]

LILY.

[*Tearing off her gloves as she enters.*] Wh-e-e-w! I'm dead! [*Giving her hand to JEYES carelessly.*] Ah, Nicko! [*To MRS. UPJOHN.*] I couldn't stand the heat in the studio any longer, mother. [*Finding ROPER beside her, she offers her cheek to him and he kisses it.*] *Mon Oncle!*

JIMMIE.

[*Closing the door.*] That young man Morgan ought to paint the infernal regions.

LILY.

[*Taking her scarf from her shoulders.*] He might finish with the angels first, though. [*To JEYES, softly, as ROPER turns to shake hands with JIMMIE.*] You in a better temper to-day?

JEYES.

[*In her ear.*] You drove me wild last night.

LILY.

[*Making a face at him.*] Served you right. [*Passing him.*] For God's sake, let me lie down. [*She throws herself upon the settee in front of the writing-table, and JEYES moves away as MRS. UPJOHN and ROPER go to her.*] Don't come near me. Give me my fan. Jimmie, where's my fan?

JIMMIE.

Oh, I've left it in Fitzroy Street!

LILY.

Beast!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Hurrying to the writing-table.*] There's one 'ere, among your presents.

LILY.

[*Unpinning her hat.*] Uncle Lal, what an adorable ring that is you've sent me!

ROPER.

[*Taking the fan from MRS. UPJOHN.*] Ring! A brooch!

LILY.

Somebody's sent me a ring.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Sitting in the chair at the end of the settee by the writing-table.*] There's three rings.

LILY.

Of course! One of them's from Nicko! [*To JEYES.*] Did you get my sweet telegram, Nicko?

JEYES.

[*Who has greeted JIMMIE and is now seated in the chair on the extreme left—sulkiily.*] I had your telegram, but it's a pendant I sent you.

JIMMIE.

[*Sitting upon the settee by the piano and pulling off her gloves.*] Ha, ha, ha!

LILY.

You shut up, Jimmie. [*Snatching the fan from ROPER.*] How on earth am I to remember! [*Fanning herself.*] Who's given me *this* pretty thing?

MRS. UPJOHN.

Mr. Monty Levine.

LILY.

Bless him! He's a dear little man, though he does bite his nails. [*GLADYS appears with VINCENT BLAND, who saunters in after her. Seeing LILY. GLADYS advances to her.*] Hallo, Vincent!

BLAND.

[*A thin, delicate looking man of eight-and-thirty, not*

over smartly dressed, wearing an eye-glass—nodding to LILY casually.] You needn't have cut me, almost on your door-step. [*To JIMMIE and JEYES.*] H'lo, Jimmie! H'lo, Nicko!

GLADYS.

[*Viewing LILY with an elevation of the brows.*] Oh, are you home?

LILY.

[*Returning GLADYS's stare.*] Apparently.

GLADYS.

I'll whistle up to Maud.

LILY.

Don't, if it's too severe a strain on you.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*To GLADYS, as the girl moves to the door.*] Gladys, we'll 'ave tea.

GLADYS.

[*At the door.*] You can't till it's ready.

LILY.

[*Calmly.*] Cheek!

[*GLADYS retires.*]

BLAND.

[*Who has strolled across to LILY, indolently.*] Why do you retain the services of that tousled-headed hussy?

LILY.

[*With conviction.*] Oh, she's a little under the weather, but she's a perfect servant.

BLAND.

[*To MRS. UPJOHN.*] Ma, you look blooming.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Wish I could return the compliment, Mr. Bland.

BLAND.

[*To ROPER, who is wearing a waistcoat of rather a pronounced pattern.*] Congratulations on your waistcoat, Lal.

ROPER.

[*Joining JIMMIE, annoyed.*] Now, no personalities.

LILY.

[*Giving BLAND her hand.*] Vincent, yours is one of the loveliest presents I've had to-day. *Remerciement!* How's that for a French accent?

BLAND.

[*Dropping his eyeglass.*] You cat!

LILY.

Why——?

BLAND.

You know I've given you nothing, not even a penny nosegay.

JIMMIE.

Ha, ha, ha!

LILY.

[*Raising herself on her elbow.*] On my honour—! Vincent dear, I swear I thought——!

BLAND.

The funds are too low. [*Replacing his eyeglass.*] I did go so far as to price a bangle at Sellby's, but that was before a certain event yesterday.

JIMMIE.

What horses did you back, Vincent? I won a fiver, through Jerry Grimwood.

ROPER.

[*To BLAND.*] You *are* a patent ass. Why don't you leave betting alone?

BLAND.

[*To ROPER, flaring up.*] Why don't you leave your City muck alone?

LILY.

[*Putting her feet to the floor, imperiously.*] That'll do. Be quiet, you two! I won't have any wrangling in my house. Run away and play, all of you. I want to speak to Vincent for a minute privately. [*With a gesture.*] Uncle Lal—Jimmie—Nicko—[*To MRS. UPJOHN.*] Scoot, mother!

MRS. UPJOHN.

Oh, dear, wot a child!

[ROPER, JIMMIE, JEYES, and MRS. UPJOHN move away and LILY beckons to BLAND.]

LILY.

Vin.

BLAND.

[Close to her, with a wry face.] Mercy!

LILY.

[In a low voice.] You've broken your word to me, then? [Through her teeth.] Those damned horses!

BLAND.

Cooling had a tip from the stable——

LILY.

Cooling! Morrie Cooling has no children; only a fat wife. You've a darling little wife and three kiddies. How much did you drop yesterday?

BLAND.

Shan't say.

LILY.

[Rising and touching his arm.] Oh, Vincent!

[She looks round, to assure herself that she is unobserved. MRS. UPJOHN and ROPER are seated at the tea-table with their heads together, talking; JIMMIE is at the piano, fingering out a piece of music; JEYES is half hidden in the arm-chair facing the

settee at the back. LILY tiptoes to the writing-table and seats herself there as GLADYS reappears showing in the BARON VON RETTENMAYER.

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*A tall, fair young man of three-and-thirty, speaking in thick, guttural tones—advancing to LILY.*] Aha, goddess! [*GLADYS withdraws.*] Many habby returns of the day!

LILY.

H'sh! I'm busy for a moment, Baron.

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*To LILY—shaking hands with BLAND.*] A thousand bardons.

LILY.

Talk to mother and Jimmie.

VON RETTENMAYER.

With blesure. [*Going to MRS. UPJOHN and ROPER and shaking hands with them.*] How are you, my dear Ma? How are you, Jimmie? [*Waving a hand to ROPER and JEYES.*] My dear Rober! My dear Neegolas!

JIMMIE.

[*To VON RETTENMAYER, mimicking him.*] Rober! Neegolas! Why don't they provide you with throat lozenges at the Embassy, Baron?

[*VON RETTENMAYER laughs. LILY has quickly opened a drawer in the writing-table and produced a cheque-book. After another*

glance over her shoulder, she sweeps the presents aside and writes. Then she replaces the cheque-book, rises, and returns to BLAND. Again there is a loud guffaw from VON RETTENMAYER in response to some sally of JIMMIE'S.

LILY.

[*To BLAND, folding a cheque and slipping it into his hand.*] Promise—promise you won't make another bet.

BLAND.

[*Unfolding the cheque.*] Your cheque?

LILY.

[*Hastily.*] Put it in your pocket.

BLAND.

A blank one.

LILY.

[*In a whisper.*] Don't fill it in for more than you can help. *I'm not over flush.*

[*He deliberately tears the cheque into four pieces and, looking at her steadily, puts them into his waistcoat-pocket.*

BLAND.

[*As he does so.*] I'll keep those, Lil, for as long as I keep anything.

LILY.

[*Hotly.*] You fool, Vincent!

BLAND.

My dear, as if——!

LILY.

Such ridiculous pride! [*Stamping her foot.*] Lord, what I owe to you!

[GLADYS enters with SAM DE CASTRO. GLADYS is carrying a lace-edged table-cloth which, assisted by MRS. UPJOHN, she proceeds to lay upon the tea-table.]

BLAND.

[*Moving away to join the others—to DE CASTRO.*] Ha, Sam!

DE CASTRO.

[*A stout, coarse, but genial-looking gentleman of forty, of marked Jewish appearance, speaking with a lisp—shaking hands with LILY.*] How are you to-day, Lil? Many happy returnth, wunth more.

LILY.

Thanks, dear old boy. [*Sitting on the settee in front of the writing-table.*] Did I send you a wire this morning?

DE CASTRO.

Not you; not a thix-pen'north.

LILY.

I ought to have done so, to acknowledge your—what was it?

DE CASTRO.

A ring—diamondth and thapphires.

LILY.

Ah, yes ; beautiful.

DE CASTRO.

It *ith* rather a nithe ring. [*Lowering his voice.*]
But I thay.

LILY.

What ?

DE CASTRO.

Mind you don't go and tell Gabth, on any account.

LILY.

[*With a great assumption of ignorance, raising her eyebrows.*] Gabs ?

DE CASTRO.

Gabrielle—Mith Kato.

LILY.

Why shouldn't I ?

DE CASTRO.

Nonsenth ; *you* know very well. [*Urgently.*] You won't, will you ?

LILY.

[*Shrugging her shoulders.*] I won't if I remember not to.

DE CASTRO.

[*Alarmed.*] Ah, now, don't be thtupid! Whath the good o' making mithchief! [*LILY shows him the tip of her tongue.*] Oh, Lil! [*GLADYS goes out.*] Lil——!

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Leaving the group at the back and putting an arm round DE CASTRO'S shoulder.*] My dear friend Zam!

DE CASTRO.

How are you, Baron? [*Going to MRS. UPJOHN.*] Afthernoon, Ma! [*Nodding to JIMMIE and ROPER.*] Afthernoon, everybody! [*Shaking hands with JEYES, who has risen and now joins the group.*] How are you, Nicko?

LILY.

[*Giving her hand to VON RETTENMAYER.*] Excuse me for cutting you short when you came in. Thanks for your splendid present. I did send you a wire, didn't I?

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Kissing her hand and bowing over it.*] I shall breserve it, with a few oder souvenirs, till the end of my life.

LILY.

[*Withdrawing her hand and blowing the compliment away.*] Phew! Lal, la, la, la!

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*In an altered tone, after a cautious look round.*] Goddess.

LILY.

Eh?

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Anxiously.*] My drifting liddle offering—I endreat you not to mention it to Enid.

LILY.

[*Laughing heartily.*] Ha, ha, ha, ha! Another of you!

VON RETTENMAYER.

The gharming Miss Mongreiff.

LILY.

[*Seriously.*] Baron, I wish you boys wouldn't make me presents and then ask me to keep them a secret from the other girls.

VON RETTENMAYER.

And I—I wish it were not nezezzary. But, goddess, you are also a young lady of the world—you know what women are.

LILY.

H'm! I know what you men are.

[*MAUD, a buxom young woman with a good-tempered face, dressed as a lady's-maid, enters quickly, tying her apron, and runs to LILY. JEYES comes to the further side of the writing-table and VON RETTENMAYER now joins him there. JIMMIE BIRCH also comes forward, accompanied by DE CASTRO.*

MAUD.

[*To LILY.*] Here, give me your things. [*LILY tosses*

her hat, scarf, and gloves to MAUD.] I was in my room, having a lie down. Is my hair untidy?

LILY.

I've never seen it anything else.

MAUD.

[Merrily.] Ha, ha, ha! *[To JIMMIE and DE CASTRO.]* Afternoon, Miss Jimmie. Afternoon, Mr. de Castro. *[To LILY.]* Now, don't let them all tire you to death, there's a pet.

LILY.

Oh, clear out. *[As MAUD is departing.]* Hi! *[Rising and kicking off her shoes and sending them in MAUD'S direction.]* Fetch me a pair of slippers.

MAUD.

[Picking up the shoes and chuckling.] He, he, he!

[When MAUD reaches the door, which she has left open, GLADYS appears with the tea-tray and with FARNCOMBE at her heels.]

GLADYS.

[To MAUD, in a low voice, witheringly.] Oh, you're doing something, are you?

MAUD.

[In the same tone, passing GLADYS.] Yes, setting you an example, my girl. *[Encountering FARNCOMBE.]* Beg pardon.

[MAUD withdraws, closing the door, and FARNCOMBE stands looking at LILY, who is talking]

to JIMMIE. GLADYS carries the tray to the tea-table.

LILY.

[*Become aware of FARNCOMBE'S presence and nodding to him.*] How d'ye do?

FARNCOMBE.

[*Moving a step or two towards her.*] I—I've been here before this afternoon. I ventured to bring you some flowers.

LILY.

[*Going to him and shaking hands with him formally.*] Nobody told me. Awfully kind of you. Where have they put them?

FARNCOMBE.

[*Lifting his basket of flowers from off the piano and showing it to her.*] Here.

LILY.

Pretty. [*Pulling out a carnation.*] Stick it up there again. [*He replaces the basket.*] You're Lord Farncombe, aren't you?

FARNCOMBE.

Yes.

LILY.

[*With a glance at the others.*] Know anybody here?

FARNCOMBE.

[*Looking round the room.*] Nearly everybody, I fancy. [*He advances to VON RETTENMAYER, who comes*

to meet him. LILY sits upon the settee by the piano and fastens the carnation in her dress. GLADYS goes out.]
Karl——!

VON RETTENMAYER.

My dear Eddie!

FARNCOMBE.

[*Bowing to DE CASTRO, who is now seated beside JIMMIE on the settee in front of the writing-table.*] How are you, Mr. de Castro? [*To JEYES, who is standing by the chair at the writing-table gnawing his moustache and watching LILY and FARNCOMBE sourly.*] How are you, Captain Jeves? [*Turning to BLAND.*] How are you, Mr. Bland? [*To LILY.*] I've been talking to Mrs. Upjohn and Mr. Roper already.

LILY.

[*Looking across to JIMMIE.*] Miss Birch—Lord Farncombe.

JIMMIE.

[*Nodding to FARNCOMBE.*] How d'ye do?

FARNCOMBE.

[*Going to JIMMIE and shaking hands with her.*] I—I needn't say that I am one of Miss Birch's warmest—most profound——

JIMMIE.

[*Smiling at him.*] That's all right; don't you bother about that.

[MAUD returns, carrying a pair of silken slippers.

VON RETTENMAYER, who has come to LILY,

makes a dart at the slippers and takes them from MAUD.

VON RETTENMAYER.

Aha! Permid me.

MAUD.

Now, Baron——! [*Slapping his arm.*] Ha, ha, ha——!

[*He pushes MAUD out of the room, she resisting laughingly, and closes the door.*]

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Holding the slippers aloft.*] Gendlemen! Homage to Beady! Vollow me! Zam! Vinzent! Rober! Neego! Eddie! [*The men put themselves behind him, in single file, in the order in which he calls them, with the exception of JEYES, who deliberately sits at the writing-table, and FARNCOMBE, who is embarrassed. JIMMIE claps her hands and MRS. UPJOHN, who is pouring out tea, laughs herself into a fit of coughing.*] Ta, ta, ra, ra, ta, ta! Boum, boum!

LILY.

Baron, you great baby!

VON RETTENMAYER.

Quig! Marge!

ROPER.

[*Calling to FARNCOMBE.*] Come along, Farncombe!

JIMMIE.

[*Giving FARNCOMBE a shove.*] (Go on!

THE "MIND THE PAINT" GIRL

[FARNCOMBE takes his place behind ROPER and, headed by VON RETTENMAYER, the men march round the room.]

VON RETTENMAYER.

[Waving the slippers in the air and singing.]

Weib, was ist in aller Welt
 Dir an Schönheit gleichgestellt!
 Reizumflossen, wunderhold,
 Perl' der Schöpfung, Herzensgold!
 Tag's Gedanken, Traum der Nacht,
 Schweben um Dich, Süsse, sacht.

[VON RETTENMAYER halts before LILY and kneels to her. She extends her left foot and he kisses her instep and puts her foot into her slipper. - She rewards him by lightly boxing his ears. He makes way for DE CASTRO, handing him the other slipper, and DE CASTRO performs the same ceremony with LILY's right foot. She upsets DE CASTRO's balance by a little kick.]

VON RETTENMAYER.

[Seating himself beside JIMMIE, singing.]

Venus, seinen Nacken beut
 Dir Dein Sklave, dienstbereit!

[DE CASTRO gathers himself up and sits in the chair at the end of the settee in front of the writing-table. BLAND and ROPER, having knelt and kissed LILY's foot, also sit, the former in the chair in the middle of the room, the latter in the chair on the extreme left. Finally, FARNCOMBE finds himself

before LILY. He looks at her hesitatingly and she returns his look with awakened interest and withdraws her foot.

LILY.

[*Shaking her head.*] No, no ; don't you be silly, like the others.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Loudly.*] Tea!

[BLAND, VON RETTENMAYER and DE CASTRO jump up and go to the tea-table where FARNCOMBE joins them. GLADYS enters, carrying a stand on which are a plate of bread-and-butter, a dish of cake, etc. ROPER takes the stand from her and the girl retires. FARNCOMBE brings LILY a cup of tea. DE CASTRO and BLAND follow him, the one with a milk-jug, the other with a sugar-basin. VON RETTENMAYER carries a cup of tea to JIMMIE, and then DE CASTRO and BLAND, having waited upon LILY, go to JIMMIE with the milk and sugar. ROPER hands the bread-and-butter and cake to LILY, then to JIMMIE, and in the end ROPER, BLAND, DE CASTRO and VON RETTENMAYER assemble at the tea-table and receive their cups of tea from MRS. UPJOHN.]

ROPER.

[*Relieving GLADYS of the stand.*] Give it to me. I want a little exercise.

LILY.

[*Taking her cup of tea from FARNCOMBE.*] Thanks.

DE CASTRO.

[*Helping LILY to milk.*] Milk-ho!

BLAND.

Sugar?

LILY.

Br-r-r-rh! I'm putting on weight as it is.

ROPER.

[*Offering the bread-and-butter, etc.—facetiously.*]
Ices, sweets or chocolates, full piano-score!

LILY.

Nothing to eat, Uncle; I dine at six.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Calling to JEYES from the tea-table.*] Captain, ain't you goin' to 'ave any tea?

JEYES.

[*Moodily examining the presents on the writing-table.*]
No, thank you, Mrs. Upjohn.

BLAND.

[*To JIMMIE, after she has been helped to milk.*]
Sugar?

JIMMIE.

Two lumps.

ROPER.

[*Pushing BLAND and DE CASTRO aside, imitating a female voice.*] Ices, sweets or chocolates, full piano-score!

JIMMIE.

[*Cutting a slice of cake.*] Lal, the world 'ud be a much happier place to live in if Lloyd George taxed your jokes.

VON RETTENMAYER, BLAND, and DE CASTRO.

[*Returning to the tea-table.*] Ha, ha, ha, ha!

LILY.

[*To FARNCOMBE, who remains standing near her.*] Seen our show at the Pandora?

FARNCOMBE.

[*Gazing at her.*] Twenty-three times.

LILY.

Not really?

FARNCOMBE.

This week and last, every night.

LILY.

[*Running her eye over him.*] You in the Guards, by any chance?

FARNCOMBE.

[*Nodding.*] Yes.

LILY.

[*Smiling.*] Ah, you'll never do a braver deed than seeing our show twenty-three times.

JIMMIE.

[*As ROPER leaves her to go to the table, her mouth full of cake.*] Boys! [*Choking.*] Heugh, heugh, heugh! Wait a minute; I've swallowed some of the Baron's German. [*Gulping.*] B-oys, seriously—no rot—[*raising her tea-cup*] jolly good health to Lily! [*There is a cry of approbation from BLAND, VON RETTENMAYER, DE CASTRO and ROPER. FARNCOMBE fetches himself a cup of tea from the tea-table.*] She's a white woman, Lily is—the staunchest, truest pal, where she takes a liking——

BLAND, VON RETTENMAYER, DE CASTRO, AND ROPER.

Hear, hear!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Pressing forward through the men and going to LILY.*] And the best daughter breathing. [*Embracing LILY and then turning to the others.*] D'ye notice the new dress I'm wearin' this afternoon?

LILY.

Don't, mother; don't.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Fifteen guineas it's cost her. [*Sitting in the chair on the extreme left, proudly.*] Madame Godolphin made it, and a 'at to go with it *ony sweet*.

LILY.

[*To Mrs. UPJOHN.*] Hu-s-s-sh!

JIMMIE.

Well——[*sipping her tea as if drinking a toast*] in a cup of tea!

BLAND, DE CASTRO, AND ROPER.

[*Sipping their tea.*] In a cup o' tea!

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Drinking.*] In a gob o' dea!

JIMMIE.

[*To VON RETTENMAYER, mockingly.*] Gob o' dea!

LILY.

[*Waving her hand.*] Thank you, Jimmie. Thank you, dear boys, from the bottom of my heart.

JIMMIE.

[*To the men.*] By Jove, she saved *me* once from going home to a cheap lodging and taking a dose of rat-killer!

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Behind ROPER and DE CASTRO, peeping over their shoulders.*] A pidy—a gread pidy.

JIMMIE.

[*To VON RETTENMAYER.*] I'll attend to you presently, Baron.

LILY.

[*To JIMMIE.*] I remember. A wretched little shrimp you looked that day.

JIMMIE.

[*To everybody.*] It was my first morning at the Pandora. They'd had me up from Harrogate in a hurry, to take Gwennie Harker's place. I'd been playing her part in the Number Two Co. in the country; and she'd left 'em in a hole, to get married to a stupid lord—[*To FARNCOMBE, finding him standing near her.*] Sorry. I was to have only one rehearsal; [*clenching her fist*] and, oh, didn't they treat me abominably! Miss ENSOR was late and we were all hanging about on the stage, waiting for her. I've never felt so cold in my life, or so lonely. Not a word of welcome, not a nod, from a single soul; simply a blank stare occasionally from a haughty beauty with a curled lip! And at last, when I was on the point of howling, I became conscious that somebody was watching me—a tall, pretty thing in a lavender frock—

DE CASTRO.

[*Sitting in the chair in the middle of the room.*]
Lil.

JIMMIE.

I caught her eye, and she came straight over to me and sat down beside me. "Shaky?" she said. "A corpse," I said. And she quietly laid hold of my hand and held it till Dolly Ensor condescended to stroll in. And when I got up I asked her who she was, and she told me. "Oh, my God," I said, "I'll

never forget your kindness! Why, of course, you're the 'Mind the Paint' girl——!"

ROPER, DE CASTRO, AND VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Singing.*] "Mind the paint! Mind the paint! Tra, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, tra, la, la, la——!"

[BLAND *scaats himself at the piano and thumps out the air of the refrain of "Mind the Paint." The three men, mouthing the tune silently, wave their arms, and LILY'S head and body move from side to side.*

BLAND.

[*With a groan.*] Ugh! Is there anything more ancient than a four-year-old comic song? [*Playing a few bars of the melody of the song.*] Shade of Nineveh and all the buried cities!

ROPER, VON RETTENMAYER, AND DE CASTRO.

[*To LILY, coaxingly.*] Lily! Goddess! Lil!

LILY.

[*Shaking her head.*] Oh, boys, it's gone. [*Pressing her temples.*] I couldn't——

[BLAND *plays the introductory symphony and then pauses. Then she sings, he accompanying her. In a moment or two, the song comes back to her readily and she gives it with great witchery and allure-ment. JEYES starts up and goes to the window in the wall on the right and looks out.*

LILY.

[Singing.]

I've a very charming dwelling,
 (You know where without the telling)
 Decorated in a style that's rather quaint!
 Smart and quaint!

When you pay my house a visit,
 You may scrutinise or quiz it,
 But you mustn't touch the paint!
 Brand-new paint!

Mind the paint! Mind the paint!
 (No matter whether Maple's bills are settled or they
 ain't!)

Once you smear it or you scratch it,
 It's impossible to match it;
 So take care, please, of the paint—of the paint!

[Rising and coming to the middle of the room,
 LILY repeats the refrain, dancing to it
 gracefully. JIMMIE also rises and she,
 ROPER, VON RETTENMAYER, and DE CASTRO
 join in the chorus and the dance, the three
 men very extravagantly. FARNCOMBE looks
 on, enraptured, while MRS. UPJOHN beats
 time with her hands.]

LILY.

[Singing.]

I'm possessed of all the graces,
 Oh, a perfect dr-r-r-ream my face is!
 (It may owe to Art a trifle or it mayn't
 H'm, it mayn't!)

And I'll cry out for assistance.
 Should you fail to keep your distance,

Goodness gracious, mind the paint!
Mind the paint!

Mind the paint! Mind the paint!
A girl is not a sinner just because she's not a saint!
But my heart shall hold you dearer—
You may come a little nearer—
If you'll *only* mind the paint—mind the paint!

[The refrain is repeated as before, MRS. UPJOHN rising and taking a share in it. Then LILY drops on to the settee before the writing-table, laughing and holding up her hands in protest.]

LILY.

No more, boys! [ROPER, VON RETTENMAYER, and DE CASTRO gather round her, applauding her and urging her to continue.] No, no; no more! I've had such a stiff day——

MRS. UPJOHN.

[With sudden energy, to everybody.] Out you go, all of you; out you go!

JIMMIE.

[To the men.] Come on; let's mizzle. *[Shaking hands with FARNCOMBE.]* Cruel of us to tire her so.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[Tapping VON RETTENMAYER on the shoulder.] Now, then, Baron!

VON RETTENMAYER.

[Shaking hands with LILY.] I'm goming.

JIMMIE.

[*Taking VON RETTENMAYER to the door.*] Well, gone!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Pulling ROPER away from LILY.*] Now, Uncle!

ROPER.

[*Adjusting his coat.*] Mind the paint, Ma.

JIMMIE.

[*Calling out.*] Good-bye, Lil!

LILY.

[*As she shakes hands with DE CASTRO, calling to JIMMIE.*] Good-bye!

[*JIMMIE and VON RETTENMAYER disappear.*]

MRS. UPJOHN.

Now, Mr. de Castro! [*Moving with ROPER towards the door.*] 'Owver d'ye think she's goin' to get through her work to-night!

DE CASTRO.

[*Pausing to comb his moustache.*] Quite right, Ma——[*thoughtlessly*] and a thupper and a danthe afterwardth.

ROPER.

[*Turning upon him quickly.*] Sssh! [*In a low voice.*] Dam fool!

DE CASTRO.

[*Clapping his hand to his mouth.*] Oh——!

[*They glance at JEYES who, hearing DE CASTRO'S remark, has left the window and come forward a step or two.*]

ROPER.

[*Uneasily.*] Er—good-bye, Nicko.

DE CASTRO.

[*To JEYES, in the same way.*] G-good-bye.

JEYES.

[*To both, dryly.*] Good-bye.

BLAND.

[*Talking to LILY, neither of them having heard DE CASTRO'S slip.*] That jingle—an echo of old times, eh?

LILY.

[*Looking up at him.*] Yes, but not better times than these times, Vin?

BLAND.

[*Sadly, holding her hand.*] Ah, Lil, there are so many tunes in life left for *you*, my dear!

ROPER.

[*At the door, with MRS. UPJOHN and DE CASTRO—to BLAND.*] Come along, Vincent.

[*BLAND joins the group at the door as FARN-COMBE approaches LILY.*]

FARNCOMBE.

[*Shaking hands with her.*] Thank you. [*With fervour.*] Glorious!

LILY.

[*Reproachfully.*] For shame!

FARNCOMBE.

I mean it.

LILY.

T'sh! [*Lightly.*] See you again some day, perhaps?

FARNCOMBE.

Ah, yes----

ROPER.

[*Calling to FARNCOMBE.*] Coming our way, Farncombe?

[*ROPER, BLAND, and DE CASTRO depart. FARNCOMBE bows to LILY and makes for the door.*]

FARNCOMBE.

[*To JEYES.*] Good-bye, Captain Jeyes.

JEYES.

[*Who has wandered to the entrance to the conservatory, where he is now standing with his back to the room—half turning.*] Good-bye.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Shaking hands with MRS. UPJOHN.*] Delightful! Enjoyed myself amazingly.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Graciously.*] Oh, we're always glad when a few folks pop in—[*he wrings her hand*] if they don't overstay their welcome.

FARNCOMBE.

Naturally. [*Hurriedly.*] Good-bye. [*He vanishes.*]

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Remaining at the door.*] Captain——

JEYES.

[*Advancing.*] I want just half a dozen words with Lily, Mrs. Upjohn.

LILY.

[*To Mrs. Upjohn.*] Tell Maud to put out my old green frock, mother; I'll be up in a minute or two.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*To Jeyes.*] Now, you won't keep 'er longer, will you?

JEYES.

[*Grimly.*] No, no; I know she won't be in bed till four o'clock to-morrow morning at the earliest. [*Mrs. Upjohn goes out, closing the door, and Jeyes comes to Lily.*] So Smythe is giving you a grand feed to-night at the theatre, Lil?

LILY.

[*Arranging the pillows on the settee.*] In the foyer.

JEYES.

And a dance, it appears.

LILY.

[*Yawning.*] Oh-h-h-h! [*Lying upon the settee at full length.*] Who told *you*, grumpy?

JEYES.

Roper and your mother told me about the supper. *You* didn't.

LILY.

Ha, ha! You were in such a vile mood last night, coming home.

JEYES.

Who will there be to dance *with* to-night?

LILY.

The men of the Company.

JEYES.

That doesn't sound very inspiring.

LILY.

Rather school-treaty, isn't it!

JEYES.

Nobody from outside?

LILY.

No; it's to be only the men in the theatre and the principal ladies.

JEYES.

Roper's going.

LILY.

Uncle Lal? Oh, well, he's hardly from outside.

JEYES.

And de Castro.

LILY.

Sam?

JEYES.

I'm sure of it, from something I heard him say just now.

LILY.

Sam used to finance Carlton. I suppose they reckon *him* one of us.

JEYES.

[*Sitting in the chair in the middle of the room.*] Smythe might have extended the compliment to *me*, Lil. He knows how I stand towards you.

LILY.

Awfully sorry; *I* can't help it.

JEYES.

[*Twining his fingers together.*] You see, if Roper and de Castro are asked, there may be others.

LILY.

[*Changing her position.*] Oh, lal, lal, lal, lal, la!

JEYES.

[*With a set jaw.*] Some of the more juvenile "boys," perhaps. [*Examining his nails.*] Lil.

LILY.

What?

JEYES.

When did you make the acquaintance of the young sprig o' the nobility who's been here this afternoon?

LILY.

Lord Farncombe? Bertie brought him and introduced him one day last week.

JEYES.

Ha! *He's* at your feet now.

LILY.

Phuh!

JEYES.

Oh, you may "phuh"! He's in front every blessed night. There he sits, Row B., three stalls from the end, prompt side!

LILY.

There are a few good-looking girls at the Pandora besides your humble servant.

JEYES.

Rubbish! His glass follows you all over the stage. I watched him talking to you in this room——

LILY.

[*Raising herself.*] Did you indeed!

JEYES.

[*Beating his clenched hands upon the arms of his chair.*] God in heaven! First it's one, then it's another, chasing you!

LILY.

[*Putting her feet to the ground.*] Oh, you're maddening, Nicko! You *are*; you're maddening. Last night it was Stewie Heneage you chose to be jealous of, simply because you'd heard him sounding my praises at Catani's! You almost broke the window of the car, you went on so!

JEYES.

I confess I object to Heneage, or any man, raving about you at the top of his voice in a public place.

LILY.

Sakes alive, why *shouldn't* Stewie rave about me in a public place, if he feels like it! I belong to the public. He might rave about a girl who's a jolly sight less deserving of being raved about, as a girl *and* an artist, than I am.

JEYES.

Well, we'll dismiss Heneage.

LILY.

Yes, exit Stewie and enter somebody else for you to fuss and fume about. This afternoon it's Lord

Farncombe, and to-morrow it'll be a fresh person altogether. One 'ud think, to hear you, that I don't know how to take care of myself, and of any poor boy who loses his head over me! [*Rising and walking away.*] You're growing worse and worse with your jealousy, Nicko. Stop it! I'm surprised at you, after all these years! It's beginning to fret me, and that's bad for my spirits and bad for me in business. [*At the tea-table, grabbing a piece of bread-and-butter and biting at it.*] And now you're making me spoil my dinner—[*relenting*] and that's not good for me either, you brute!

JEYES.

[*His hands hanging loosely between his knees, sighing heavily.*] Oh, Lily, Lily——!

LILY.

Yes, oh, Lily, Lily!

JEYES.

Why—why don't you put me out of my misery?

LILY.

[*Munching.*] Poison you?

JEYES.

Marry me.

LILY.

[*Behind his chair.*] Marry you? [*Taking his handkerchief from his breast-pocket and wiping her fingers upon it—sarcastically.*] Have you come to tell me you've got some work to do at last? Break it gently, Nicko; the shock might be too great for me.

JEYES.

Oh, *I'd* find a billet soon enough, Lil, if only *I'd* an incentive to hunt for it.

LILY.

Incentive! You *had* an incentive twelve months ago, when I was willing to engage myself to you absolutely if you could obtain a good secretaryship or something of the sort.

JEYES.

I—I've no fancy for a beggarly secretaryship.

LILY.

No; all *you've* a fancy for, seemingly, is for living on your unfortunate people. [*Throwing him his handkerchief and leaving him.*] How a man of your age can rest satisfied with being a burden to others passes my dull comprehension!

JEYES.

I—I *have* been a bit slack, I own—I *have* been a bit leisurely; but——

LILY.

[*Inspecting some of the flowers about the room.*] Nicko, that pendant, or whatever it is, you've given me—I don't want to hurt you, but I won't accept it. You take it away with you; do you hear?

JEYES.

[*Not heeding her, weakly.*] Lil——

LILY.

I'm in earnest ; you remove it from off my premises.

JEYES.

Lil—[*she returns to him*] my eldest brother—Robert—[*looking up at her*] Bob—[*She nods inquiringly.*] Bob's at me to go out to Rhodesia, to manage a group of stock farms he's interested in near Bulawayo.

LILY.

Oh, why don't you go ?

JEYES.

[*Forlornly.*] Rhodesia ! Bulawayo ! [*Looking up at her again with a dismal smile.*] Come with me ?

LILY.

Don't be absurd.

JEYES.

[*Rising and putting his hands upon her shoulders.*] No, you wouldn't care a straw—not a brass farthing—if I *did* go, would yer !

LILY.

[*Softening again.*] Stuff ! I should miss you horribly. [*Toying with a button of his waistcoat.*] Who'd bring me home from the theatre at night *then*, and from rehearsals ; who—— ?

JEYES.

Ah, *who* ! [*His grip tightening on her.*] *Who* !

LILY.

[*Wincing.*] Ssss! You'll bruise my skin if you're not careful.

JEYES.

[*Taking her hand and crumpling it in his.*] Well, it might be that you'd miss me for a while—the old dog that you're accustomed to find lying on your door-mat; [*pressing her hand to his lips*] but you don't love me, Lil—not even as much as you did a year ago. You don't love me!

LILY.

[*With a faint shrug of her shoulders.*] Perhaps I don't, in the way you mean; [*wistfully*] perhaps it's not in me really to love anybody in a marrying way. [*Meeting his eyes.*] Still, as you say——

JEYES.

As I say——?

LILY.

[*Pursing her mouth at him winningly.*] I'm accustomed to you, Nicko. [*He draws her to him; but, with a laugh, she checks him by offering him her head to kiss.*] There—[*putting the point of her finger playfully on the crown of her head*] you may there. [*As he kisses her.*] Now I must run upstairs, or mother'll whack me.

JEYES.

[*Detaining her.*] Won't you allow me to fetch you after the dance?

LILY.

Three or four in the morning! No; I'll give you

a rest. Uncle Lal or Sam'll take on your job. [*Going to the door.*] And don't try to see me to-morrow.

JEYES.

[*Sharply.*] Why not ?

LILY.

Not till you turn up at night as usual. I shall be a shocking rag all day.

JEYES.

[*Breaking out.*] Yes, I expect you'll manage to enjoy yourself thoroughly, and dance yourself off your feet, whoever your partners may be !

LILY.

[*Wilfully.*] Expect I shall. [*Tossing her head up.*] Ha, ha ! I'll do my best.

[*She departs, leaving him standing near the tea-table. He takes out his handkerchief and mops his brow. As he does so, his eyes rest upon the telephone-instrument on the writing-table and he stares at it. He hesitates, as if struggling to resist an impulse ; then he goes quickly to the instrument and puts the receiver to his ear.*

JEYES.

[*After a pause.*] Gerrard, three, eight, four, eight. [*Discovering that LILY has left the door wide open, he lays the receiver upon the writing-table and goes to the door and shuts it. Then he returns to the writing-table and again listens at the receiver.*] Is that the office of the Pandora Theatre ? . . . [*Suddenly, imitating the*

voice of DE CASTRO.] Ith Mithter Morrith Cooling in?
 . . . I'm Mithter de Castro . . . Tham de Castro
 . . . Gone, ith he? . . . Oh, ith that you, Mithter
 Hickthon? . . . Yeth, you'll do . . . About the
 thupper-party to-night that Mithter Smythe ith giving
 to Mith Parradell . . . Yer there? . . . I didn't quite
 underthtand whether ith to be at the theatre or at a
 rethtaurong . . . At the theatre? . . . Oh, yeth . . .
 A largth party? . . . Oh, that *ith* nithe! . . . Who
 are the guesth, d'ye know? . . . Yeth? . . . Yeth?
 . . . Oh, an' the boyth! . . . oh, thome o' the *boyth* are
 comin', are they! . . . Hey? . . . Haven't got the
 litht from Mithter Roper yet? . . . Oh, *he'th* been
 helpin' to get it up! . . . Oh, we *shall* have a
 thplendid time! . . . The boyth! . . . Yeth! . . .
 Yeth! . . . ha, ha, ha, ha! . . . thankth . . .
 goo'bye!

[*He replaces the receiver and stands looking at the door for a moment. Then, with his head bent and his hands clasped behind him, he goes slowly out.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

THE SECOND ACT

The scene is an artistically decorated refreshment-saloon—or “foyer”—on the first-circle floor of a theatre. The wall facing the spectator is panelled partly in glass, and through the glazed panels the corridor behind the circle, and the doors admitting to the circle, are seen. The right-hand wall is panelled in a similar way, showing the landing at the top of the principal staircase and an entrance to the corridor. Some music-stands and stools are on the landing, arranged for a small orchestra.

In the right-hand wall there is a double swing-door giving on to the landing; and in the wall at the back, opening on to, and from, the corridor, there is a single swing-door on the left and another on the right. The left-hand door is fastened back into the saloon by a hook. Between the two doors in the back wall runs the refreshment-counter.

In one of the further corners of the saloon there is a plaster statue representing the Muse of Comedy, in the opposite corner a companion figure of Dancing. In the wall on the left, the grate hidden by flowers, is a fireplace with a fender-stool before it, and on either side of the fireplace there is a

capacious and richly upholstered arm-chair. A settee of like design stands against the wall on the right between the double-door and the spectator.

The counter is decked-out as a sideboard, and at equal distances from each other there are four round tables laid for a supper-party of twenty-six persons. There are eight chairs at one table and six at each of the others, the chairs being of the sort usually supplied by ball-caterers.

The saloon and the landing without are brilliantly lighted, the corridor less brightly.

[LUIGI and four waiters—one of whom has a curly head and a fair beard ending in two flamboyant points—are putting the finishing touches to the laying of the tables, while MORRIS COOLING, a person of imposing presence displaying a vast expanse of shirt-front, is engaged in placing upon each of the serviettes a card bearing the name of a guest.

COOLING.

[Referring to a plan of the tables which he has in his hand.] Miss Connify—Miss Connify—Miss Connify—where's Miss Connify? Ah, here you are, my dear—[moving to MISS CONNIFY'S chair and putting a card upon her serviette] next to old Arthur.

[The four waiters, obeying a direction in dumb-show from LUIGI, go out at the door on the left.

LUIGI.

[A little, dark, active man—viewing the tables with satisfaction.] Tables look nice, Mr. Cooling?

COOLING.

[*Absorbed.*] Not bad—not bad—not bad. [LUIGI follows the waiters.] Miss Kato? [*Moving to another table and laying a card upon a serviette.*] Gabrielle.

[ROPER bustles in through the double-door, in high feather.

ROPER.

Hul-lo! [*Cutting a caper.*] Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and how are you to-morrow!

COOLING.

[*Deep in his plan of the tables.*] Hul-lo, Lal!

ROPER.

[*Surveying the tables.*] Splendid! [*Going from one table to another.*] Seating 'em, hey?

COOLING.

Mr. Palk—Mr. Palk—Mr. Palk? [*Placing another card.*] Albert.

ROPER.

Which d'ye make your principal table?

COOLING.

There it is; you're at it.

ROPER.

Ah, yes. [*Examining the cards.*] "Miss Lily Paradell—"! [*His jaw falling.*] Why, you've gone and put the Baron on her right!

COOLING.

[*Unconsciously.*] Well, what's the objection?

ROPER.

Where's Farncombe? Where's Lord Farncombe?

COOLING.

On the other side, with Dolly Stidulph and Enid.

ROPER.

Rats!

COOLING.

What do you mean by Rats? [*Advancing to the principal table—nettled.*] Look heah, Lal——!

ROPER.

My dear fellow, Miss Parradell is the heroine o' the party; the seat next to her is the seat of honour.

COOLING.

That's why I've put the Baron there. With things as they are between England and Germany——

ROPER.

If Germany doesn't like it, she must lump it. Lord Farncombe's the eldest son of an Earl; you can't get over that.

COOLING.

[*Picking up FARNCOMBE'S card.*] Oh, have it your own way.

ROPER.

[*Picking up VON RETTENMAYER'S card.*] Besides, the Baron's sweet on Enid just now; I'm sure he'd prefer—[*They exchange the cards and rearrange them.*] thanks, ol' man. Sorry I was shirty.

COOLING.

[*Laying down his plan and cards and producing a letter from his breast-pocket.*] By-the-bye, the fair Lily—the heroine of the party, as you call her—is in a pretty tantrum over the whole business.

ROPER.

Tantrum?

COOLING.

[*Unfolding the letter.*] Had this from her ten minutes ago. Listen to *this*. [*Reading.*] "My Dressing-room. 11-15. 80 degrees, with the windows open." [*In an injured tone.*] Haw, so I should think!

ROPER.

[*Concerned.*] What's amiss?

COOLING.

[*Reading.*] "Morrie, you pig." [ROPER *whistles.*] "Morrie, you pig. I should feel deeply indebted to you if you would kindly inform me why the devil you went out of your way to deceive me last night. You led me to suppose—and so did that lying worm Lal Roper——" [*looking at ROPER*] *You.*

ROPER.

Oh, lord!

COOLING.

[*Resuming.*] "—that lying worm Lal Roper——"

ROPER.

[*Testily.*] All right, all right.

COOLING.

"—you both led me to suppose that this rotten banquet was to be a family gathering of the ladies and gentlemen of the Pandora Theatre, and no outsiders asked. Now I find that only three or four of the men of the Company are invited, and I hear from Nita Trevenna, who has got it from young Kennedy, that several of the Boys are to be laid on for the occasion. The result is you have made me tell a regular whopper to a particular friend of mine with regard to this affair——"

ROPER.

[*Passing his hand over his brow.*] Nicko Jeyes.

COOLING.

"—which I will never forgive you for, Morris Cooling—neither you nor Lal Roper. As true as I am alive, I have a jolly good mind not to show, but to put on my old rags and go straight home. You are two cads. So take it out of that and believe me, Always yours affectionately, Lil."

ROPER.

[*Walking about.*] Well, I'm blessed!

COOLING.

[*Returning the letter to his pocket.*] Haw! Tasty document!

ROPER.

Lying worm and a cad! And from Miss Lily Margaret Upjohn! [*To COOLING.*] Done anything about it?

COOLING.

No; waited for you. [*Going on with his arrangements at the tables.*] You're responsible. What I did last night was simply to oblige a pal.

ROPER.

[*Irresolutely.*] I'd better run round to her, and try to smooth her down, hadn't I?

COOLING.

Perhaps you *had*. [*Placing a card.*] Mr. Stewart Heneage. [*To ROPER.*] Why you wanted to mislead the girl I can't understand.

ROPER.

Damn it, you agreed that that sulky brute Jeyes 'ud be a wet blanket! You blow hot and cold, you do!

COOLING.

There you go! More filthy temper!

ROPER.

If ever I assist in getting up another party——! [*As he reaches the door on the left, he encounters CARLTON SMYTHE, who is entering at that moment, and puts on his humourous manner.*] Hul-lo! Here we are again! All change for Oxford Circus!

SMYTHE.

[*A bulky, sleepy-looking man with grey hair, a darker moustache and beard, and a heavy, rolling gait.*] Ha, Lal!

ROPER.

I'm just going to have a word with Lil Parradell.
[*He disappears and SMYTHE advances.*]

COOLING.

[*Approaching SMYTHE.*] How are you to-night, Chief?

SMYTHE.

[*A silk hat on the back of his head, an overcoat on his arm—regarding the preparations with disgust.*] Puh! Here's a muck and a muddle!

COOLING.

Don't worry; we'll clear it away in no time. Shall I tell you who are coming?

SMYTHE.

No; I shall know soon enough. What was the house to-night?

COOLING.

[*Producing a long slip of paper and handing it to SMYTHE.*] Big. [*SMYTHE scans the paper through half-closed lids and gives a growl of contentment.*] Haw! And the weather dead against us.

SMYTHE.

[*Screwing up the paper, and cramming it into his waistcoat-pocket.*] There's no bad weather for a good play. [*Looking at his hands.*] I'll go and have a wash and brush up. [*LUIGI returns, entering at the door on the left, and goes behind the counter. The waiters follow him, carrying some melons lying upon ice in plated dishes. They deposit the dishes upon the counter and LUIGI proceeds to cut the melon into slices. COOLING resumes, at a table on the left, the placing of the cards. As SMYTHE is moving towards the right-hand door at the back, STEWART HENEAGE and GERALD GRIMWOOD—two exquisitely dressed youths with blank faces—enter from the landing. SMYTHE shakes hands with them.*] Ha, Mr. Heneage! Ha, Mr. Grimwood! [*HENEAGE and GRIMWOOD murmur some polite expressions.*] Excuse me; I'm just going to wash my hands. [*DE CASTRO enters, also at the double-door, and SMYTHE shakes hands with him. HENEAGE and GRIMWOOD drift over to COOLING, who hails them warmly.*] How do, Sam! Back in a moment; just going to wash my hands.

DE CASTRO.

[*Detaining him.*] I thay, Carlton.

SMYTHE.

Eh?

DE CASTRO.

[*Lowering his voice.*] I've been in front again to-night. Magnifithent! Marvellouth!

SMYTHE.

[*Resignedly.*] It'll do; I shall get a couple o' years out of it.

DE CASTRO.

There'th jutht *one* little improvement I'd like to thee, if I may thuggetht it.

SMYTHE.

What's that?

DE CASTRO.

[*Linking his arm in SMYTHE'S.*] You're thure you won't conthider me prethumptuouth?

SMYTHE.

Of course not; very kind of yer.

DE CASTRO.

[*In SMYTHE'S ear.*] If you *could* give Gabth—Mith Kato—a tiny bit more to do in the thecond act——!

SMYTHE.

[*Nodding.*] Ah, yes, yes.

DE CASTRO.

She'th a little lump o' talent, that gal, if you only realithed it; a perfect little lump o' talent.

SMYTHE.

[*Trying to escape.*] Er—I'll think it over.

DE CASTRO.

Will yer! An extra thong! That'th all it need be—an extra thong! Oh, it would be *thuck* an improvement! [VON RETTENMAYER *enters at the double-door. The waiters now go to the tables and lay a plate with a slice of melon upon it at each cover.*] Here'th the Baron. We've been thitting together to-night, I and the Baron. [Wringing SMYTHE's hand.] Thankth. [Joining COOLING and the others on the left as SMYTHE greets VON RETTENMAYER.] Hullo, Morrith! [Shaking hands with HENEAGE and GRIMWOOD.] Well, boyth!

SMYTHE.

[Shaking hands with VON RETTENMAYER.] Glad to see yer, Baron.

VON RETTENMAYER.

Zo good of you to haf me.

SMYTHE.

Excuse me; I'm just going to wash my hands.

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Detaining him.*] Bardon me—one moment——

SMYTHE.

Eh?

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Dropping his voice.*] May I dake the liberdy of

indulging in a liddle criticism on your eggcellent blay?

SMYTHE.

Certainly.

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Drawing SMYTHE away from the tables.*] Come here. [*His mouth close to SMYTHE's ear.*] The second aggd!

SMYTHE.

Second act; what's the matter with it?

VON RETTENMAYER.

The pard where the gharining Miss Barradell is ghanging her gostume——

SMYTHE.

Yes?

VON RETTENMAYER.

That is where the biece requires lifding—[*with a gesture*] lifding.

SMYTHE.

Lifding?

VON RETTENMAYER.

Mr. Davish—Mr. Balk—eggsdremely glever; [*slipping his arm through SMYTHE's*] but if you could zee your way glear to gif Enid—Miss Mongreiff—anoder dance——

SMYTHE.

[*Nodding.*] Ah, h'm, h'm.

VON RETTENMAYER.

It would remove the zolitary imberfection.

SMYTHE.

Er—I'll think it over. [*Releasing himself.*] I'm just going to wash my hands. We'll talk about it later.

VON RETTENMAYER.

Schoensten Dank. [*Going to the men on the left.*] Aha, Mr. Gooling! My dear Steward—my dear Jerry——!

[*As SMYTHE is again making for the door on the left, MRS. STIDULPH enters from the landing with COLONEL STIDULPH.*]

SMYTHE.

[*To MRS. STIDULPH.*] Ha, Dolly! [*Kissing her.*] How are you, my dear?

MRS. STIDULPH.

[*A mature but still beautiful woman, gorgeously dressed and wearing showy jewels—with a lofty air.*] How are you, Carlton?

SMYTHE.

[*To STIDULPH.*] How d'ye do, Arthur? Delighted to see yer.

MRS. STIDULPH.

Lucky I'm able to come to you to-night. It's so difficult to catch me in the season.

SMYTHE.

Been in front?

MRS. STIDULPH.

M'yes; [*in a tone of boredom*] oh, yes.

SMYTHE.

What, don't you like it?

MRS. STIDULPH.

Oh, I don't say I *dislike* it; [*shrugging her shoulders*] but one can't forget what one *used* to do here in the old days.

STIDULPH.

[*An elderly, distinguished-looking man with a meek voice and a courteous but rather nervous manner.*] I've had a most enjoyable evening, Carlton. So bright; so very bright!

MRS. STIDULPH.

[*To STIDULPH, sneeringly.*] Oh, anything pleases you; you'd laugh at Punch and Judy.

SMYTHE.

I'm just running away to wash my hands. [*Looking towards the men on the left.*] You know Von Rettenmayer?

MRS. STIDULPH.

Know him! Why, he was about in my time! [*Crossing to VON RETTENMAYER, followed by STIDULPH.*] Karl!

VON RETTENMAYER.

My dear lady! [*Kissing her hand perfunctorily.*]
What bliss! [*Shaking hands with STIDULPH.*] Colonel!

MRS. STIDULPH.

[*Shaking hands with DE CASTRO.*] How are you, Sam?

DE CASTRO.

Ah, Dolly! [*To STIDULPH.*] Hullo, Arthur!

COOLING.

[*Presenting HENEAGE and GRIMWOOD to the STIDULPHS.*] Mr. Stewart Heneage—Mr. Gerald Grimwood——

[*As the STIDULPHS leave SMYTHE, HERBERT FULKERSON enters from the landing with FARNCOMBE. In dumb-show, SMYTHE and FULKERSON greet each other and then FULKERSON introduces FARNCOMBE.*]

SMYTHE.

[*Shaking hands with FARNCOMBE.*] Glad to make your acquaintance.

FARNCOMBE.

Glad to make *yours*, Mr. Smythe—and in such pleasant circumstances!

FULKERSON.

[*A white-faced young man with red eyes and of generally dissipated appearance—espying Mrs. STI-*

DULPH.] By Jove, if it isn't Dolly Ensor ! [*Hurrying to Mrs. STIDULPH.*] What cheer, Dolly !

MRS. STIDULPH.

[*Coldly.*] How do you do, Mr. Fulkerson ?

FULKERSON.

[*Slightly abashed.*] Oh, I—I'm pretty middlin', thanks ; hope you're the same. [*Nodding to STIDULPH.*] Evenin', Arthur.

[VINCENT BLAND *has sauntered in at the door on the left and now joins the group surrounding the STIDULPHS.*

BLAND.

[*Nodding to HENEAGE and GRIMWOOD.*] H'lo, Stewart ! H'lo, Jerry ! [*Coming to the STIDULPHS.*] Dolly—Colonel——

SMYTHE.

[*To FARNCOMBE.*] I'll be back in a minute or two ; I'm just going to wash my hands.

FULKERSON.

[*Calling to FARNCOMBE.*] Hi ! Eddie !

[FARNCOMBE *crosses to FULKERSON and is presented by him to the STIDULPHS. GABRIELLE KATO enters at the right-hand door at the back, meeting SMYTHE as he is going out. The waiters have finished setting the plates of melon upon the tables and now withdraw, carrying the plated dishes and preceded by LUIGI, at the door on the left.*

SMYTHE.

[*To GABRIELLE.*] Hi, Gabby, my dear! Quite well, eh?

GABRIELLE.

[*A pretty young woman with a fretful little face expressive of extreme dissatisfaction with the world—looking at SMYTHE spiritlessly.*] This is a treat. Why, you haven't been to see us for ages.

SMYTHE.

[*Cunningly.*] I see you all far oftener than you suspect.

GABRIELLE.

Do you? That is sly of you.

SMYTHE.

[*Leaving her.*] I'm just going to have a wash and brush up.

GABRIELLE.

Really? Oh, you *are* full of news.

[*He departs as DE CASTRO approaches GABRIELLE.*

DE CASTRO.

[*In a low voice.*] Hullo, Gabth! How are you to-night?

GABRIELLE.

Oh, I'm all right, I s'pose. Isn't it hot?

DE CASTRO.

[*Not at his ease with her.*] It *ith* inclined that way.

[DAPHNE DURE, NITA TREVENNA, DOUGLAS GLYNN, and ALBERT PALK enter at the door on the left. NITA is a tall, handsome girl, DAPHNE a plump, little, fair, baby-faced thing. They are charmingly dressed, as are all the ladies of the Pandora Theatre. GLYNN and PALK—the latter a short, thick-set man who might reasonably be a low comedian—are two professional-looking gentlemen of the best class. The arrivals are warmly hailed by FULKERSON, VON RETTENMAYER, HENEAGE, and GRIMWOOD and, with more reserve, by MRS. STIDULPH. STIDULPH has seated himself wearily in the armchair on the nearer side of the fireplace and, beyond listening to BLAND who is talking to him, has withdrawn himself from the proceedings.]

FULKERSON.

[To FARNCOMBE.] Here's Daphne Dure—and Nita Trevenna. [Going to the new comers.] Hullo, Daphne! Hullo, Nita! How'r'yer, Douglas! Hullo, Albert!

DAPHNE and NITA.

How d'ye do, Bertie? [To VON RETTENMAYER.] How d'ye do, Von?

VON RETTENMAYER.

[Kissing their hands.] Dear ladies! [To GLYNN and PALK.] Aha, Mr. Glynn—Mr. Balk—!

DAPHNE and NITA.

[*To HENEAGE and GRIMWOOD.*] How d'ye do, Stewie? How d'ye do, Jerry? [*To MRS. STIDULPH.*] Oh, Dolly! That you, Dolly?

MRS. STIDULPH.

Well, girls!

FULKERSON.

Here! I want to introduce Lord Farncombe. Miss Dure—Miss Trevenna—Lord Farncombe. Douglas—Albert—Lord Farncombe.

NITA.

[*Pouncing upon COOLING.*] I say, Morris!

COOLING.

What is it, my dear?

NITA.

Is it true that little Kennedy's met with an accident?

COOLING.

Yes; can't join us.

FULKERSON.

The Dwarf! What's happened?

COOLING.

Ran his car into a 'bus, just outside the theatre.

NITA,

Oh!

COOLING.

Pitched himself forward on to his head.

NITA.

His head!

DAPHNE.

[*With a simper.*] Don't be anxious, Nita; there's nothing to hurt *there*.

VON RETTENMAYER.

Poor Dwarf!

[*GABRIELLE and DE CASTRO now move over to the others.*]

FULKERSON.

Hullo, Gabs! Hullo, Sam!

GABRIELLE.

Ah, Bertie!

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Kissing GABRIELLE's hand.*] Gabrielle!

GABRIELLE.

Ah, Von! [*To HENEAGE and GRIMWOOD.*] Ah, boys! [*To MRS. STIDULPH.*] How'r' *you*?

DE CASTRO.

[*Shaking hands.*] Daphne—Nita—Douglath—Albert——!

FULKERSON.

I want to introduce Lord Farncombe. Miss Kato—
—Lord Farncombe—

[*A band of musicians have mustered upon the landing and there is the sound of the tuning of instruments.*]

COOLING.

[*Hurrying across to the double-door.*] No, no; no music yet. Wait for Miss Parradell! [*As he reaches the double-door, ROPER enters quickly at the right-hand door at the back and seizes his arm.*] Eh?

ROPER.

[*To COOLING.*] It's all right; she'll be round in a minute.

COOLING.

Amiable?

ROPER.

Angelic. She's wearing a new dress, and that's taken her mind off it.

COOLING.

Her bark's always worse than her bite. I knew it 'ud blow over.

ROPER.

[*Formidably.*] Oh, but I have given her such a talking to! [*COOLING passes through the double-door, and instructs the leader of the band, while ROPER bustles over to the throng on the left.*] Hul-lo! [*Imitating a street news-vendor.*] Speshul edishun, cricket, pyper! [*Shaking hands all round.*] Dolly—Nita—Gabs

—Daphne! Douglas—Albert! Ah, here you are, Farncombe! [*Discovering STIDULPH.*] Hul-lo, Colonel! Results, py-per, extr'y speshul!

[*ENID MONCREIFF, WILFRID TAVISH, and SIGISMUND SHIRLEY enter at the right-hand door at the back. ENID is a long, spare-figured girl with the lissom walk of a dancer; TAVISH and SHIRLEY are tall, clean-shaven men of gentlemanlike appearance. VON RETTENMAYER makes for ENID eagerly and is followed, at a more moderate pace, by HENEAGE, GRIMWOOD, and DE CASTRO, and by FULKERSON bringing FARNCOMBE.*

VON RETTENMAYER.

Miss Mongreiff! [*Kissing ENID's hand with fervour.*] Your dancing was more zurprizing to-night than ever. [*To TAVISH and SHIRLEY.*] Aha, my friends!

ENID.

[*Shaking hands with HENEAGE, GRIMWOOD, and DE CASTRO.*] Well, Stew! How are you, Jerry! Sam!

FULKERSON.

I want to introdooce Lord Farncombe. Miss Moncreiff—Lord Farncombe.

ROPER.

[*Hurrying across.*] Hul-lo, here's Enid!

DE CASTRO.

[*Shaking hands with TAVISH and SHIRLEY.*] Piethe went thplendidly thith evenin', didn't it?

FULKERSON.

[*Shaking hands with TAVISH and SHIRLEY.*] I want to introduce Lord Farncombe. Mr. Tavish—Mr. Shirley—Lord Farncombe.

ENID.

[*Coming forward to greet MRS. STIDULPH who advances to her.*] Dolly dear!

MRS. STIDULPH.

[*Embracing ENID.*] Enid darling! Good gracious, you're becoming an absolute skeleton!

ENID.

Indeed? Well, no one can say that of *you*.

MRS. STIDULPH.

It is a pleasure, meeting all you girls to night. Of course, one can't help seeing *changes*.

ENID.

[*Icily.*] Ah, it must be a pleasure, *that*.

MRS. STIDULPH.

I'm going to scold dear old Carlton by-and-by. He never gave *me* a birthday-party when I was with him.

ENID.

No; and you had so many birthdays here, hadn't you?

[COOLING returns, entering from the landing, and,

after looking at the assembly, goes out at the right-hand door at the back. At the same moment, FLO CONNIFY, SYBIL DERMOTT, OLGA COOK, and EVANGELINE VENTRIS—four statuesque beauties with impassive faces—enter at the door on the left. OLGA is in a dark gown and EVANGELINE is wearing a rather elaborate head-dress. Instantly there is a movement in the direction of the new arrivals on the part of ROPER, HENEAGE, and GRIMWOOD. DE CASTRO and FULKERSON follow, FULKERSON still leading FARNCOMBE about with him. MRS. STIDULPH turns from ENID disdainfully and joins NITA and DAPHNE at the fireplace. TAVISH and SHIRLEY also move to the left, where they come upon STIDULPH and shake hands with him, while VON RETTENMAYER and ENID, the latter flushed with victory, seat themselves upon the settee on the right.

ROPER.

[Hastening to the beauties.] Hul-lo! Show your tickets, please! Room inside for four! *[Shaking hands.]* How are you, Flo! How are you, Sybil! How are you, Olga! I say, look at 'Vangy!

THE FOUR BEAUTIES.

[As the men shake hands with them, mechanically.]
How d'ye do? How d'ye do? How d'ye do? How d'ye do?

FULKERSON.

Here! I want to introduce Lord Farncombe. Miss Connify—Lord Farncombe. Miss Dermott—Miss Cook—Miss 'Vangy Ventris—Lord Farncombe.

THE FOUR BEAUTIES.

[*As before.*] How d'ye do? How d'ye do? How d'ye do? How d'ye do?

[COOLING hurries back.

COOLING.

[*To everybody.*] Miss Parradell! [*Opening the double-door and signalling to the leader of the band.*] Now!

[*The band strikes up the air of "Mind the Paint," as LILY enters at the right-hand door at the back with JIMMIE BIRCH. LILY is dressed in white, and altogether fulfils exteriorly ROPER's description of "angelic." She carries a large bouquet of lilies and pale roses with a broad ribbon flowing from it. All the men but FARNCOMBE, who holds aloof, press round her, STIDULPH rising and joining them. The ladies follow.*

THE MEN.

[*Struggling for her hand.*] Many happy returns of the day! Many happy returns of the day! Many happy returns of the day!

JIMMIE.

[*Battling with the men.*] Keep away from her! Bertie, you're on her frock! Mind her frock!

ROPER.

Mind the paint !

SOME OF THE MEN.

Ha, ha, ha !

LILY.

[*Holding her bouquet above her head.*] My roses !
Be careful of me, boys ! One at a time !

THE MEN.

Many happy returns of the day !

LILY.

I want to kiss the girls. Girls—— !

[*The men make way for the ladies who come to*

LILY.

THE LADIES.

Many happy returns of the day !

LILY.

[*Embracing them.*] Sybil—Nita— ! Ob, Mrs. Stidulph !—Enid—Daphne—Gabs—Flo dear—Olga—'Vangy—— !

PALK.

[*Suddenly.*] Here's the guv'nor !

[SMYTHE enters at the door on the left. LUIGI and the waiters are behind him, the waiters carrying trays on which are sugar-casters and dishes of powdered ginger. At once there is a movement towards SMYTHE of everybody except those who have already

*greeted him, and LILY who is detained by
ROPER and others.*

TAVISH.

How are you, guv'nor?

SOME OF THE LADIES.

How d'ye do, Mr. Smythe?

OTHER LADIES.

[*Hustling him.*] How are you, Carlton?

SMYTHE.

[*In the midst of them all.*] Girls, girls! I'll shake hands with you all in turn, girls.

ENID.

Thought you were dead.

DAPHNE.

Yes; look at Olga—she's in deep mourning.

SOME OF THE LADIES.

Ha, ha, ha!

SMYTHE.

[*Shaking hands.*] Don't, girls, don't; you're smothering me.

LILY.

[*During a momentary lull, finding FARNCOMBE standing before her and raising her eyebrows.*] You! [*Giving him her hand carelessly.*] Oh, it isn't long before we meet again, is it?

SMYTHE.

[*Puffing and blowing.*] That's the lot of yer. Phew! Where's Lily? Lily here? [*The crowd divides, to allow him to advance. Seeing LILY, he opens his arms and she goes to him and lays her head upon his breast.*] Lil—[*patting her shoulders*] my dear!

LILY.

[*Half gaily, half tearfully.*] Ha, ha, ha! Carlton!

SMYTHE.

Go'blessyer! [*In another tone.*] Well, what about something to eat!

LUIGI.

Ready, Mr. Smythe. [*Loudly.*] Ladies and gentlemen, supper is ready!

SMYTHE.

Ha!

COOLING.

[*At the principal table.*] Here you are, Chief! Miss Parradell!

SMYTHE.

[*To LILY.*] Come along!

[*There is a general hunt for places and much hubbub and confusion.*]

COOLING.

[*Calling to ROPER.*] Lal, that's your table.

ROPER.

[*Imitating a shop-walker.*] Mr. Roper, forward!

COOLING.

Mrs. Stidulph! Lord Farncombe! [*Pointing to another table.*] Glynn, you're there.

BLAND.

Here you are, Daphne!

ROPER.

[*At his table.*] Miss Kato, wanted!

DE CASTRO.

[*Calling to GABRIELLE.*] Gabth!

NITA.

[*Calling to HENEAGE.*] Stewie!

COOLING.

Baron—Enid——

VON RETTENMAYER.

Aha!

COOLING.

[*To STIDULPH.*] Over there, Colonel.

FULKERSON.

[*Wandering about.*] Where am I? Where am I?

NITA.

[*Pushing him aside.*] Oh, be off!

LILY.

[*Calling.*] Jimmie!

COOLING.

[*At his place at a table.*] Olga, you're here. Mr. Grimwood!

FULKERSON.

Where am I?

JIMMIE.

[*To FULKERSON.*] Next to me, worse luck. [*Screwing up her face at him.*] Ugh!

ROPER.

Ladies' mantles on the second-floor!

COOLING.

Where's Sybil?

DAPHNE.

[*Calling.*] Syb! Syb!

[*The curtain falls, but the music of "Mind the Paint" continues for a while. Then it ceases and, after a short silence, the curtain rises again. The supper-tables have disappeared and the saloon is empty of people. The musicians and their music-stands and stools have also gone, and faintly from the distance comes the sound of a waltz. Two settees, matching the rest of the furniture, now stand in the centre of the saloon back-to-back, one of them facing the counter, the other facing the spectator. LILY'S bouquet lies on the nearer of the two settees, and upon the floor there is a fan, a red rose that has fallen from a lady's corsage, and a pocket-handkerchief with a powder-puff*

peeping from it. On the counter there are carafes of lemonade, decanters of spirits and syphons of soda-water, a bowl of strawberries-and-cream, various dishes of cakes, boxes of cigars and cigarettes, a lighted spirit-lamp, and other adjuncts of a buffet. COLONEL STIDULPH wanders in through the double-door as the waltz comes to an end. Feebly and dejectedly he goes to the counter, takes a cigarette, and is lighting it when LUIGI and the waiters enter the door on the left. Two of the waiters are carrying bottles of champagne in wine-coolers, another brings a tray on which are champagne-glasses and tumblers, and the bearded waiter follows with a large dish of sandwiches.

LUIGI.

[Behind the counter—to STIDULPH, familiarly.]
Ain't you dancing, Colonel?

STIDULPH.

Dancing—I? [Shaking his head.] No.

LUIGI.

[Who speaks Cockney English with a slight foreign accent—cutting the wire of a champagne bottle.] Why, you used to be a regular slap-up dancing man when I first knew you.

STIDULPH.

[Nodding.] Ah, ah; [moving away] my dancing days are done.

LUIGI.

Done! Oh, I like that! I bet you ain't sixty, come now, eh?

STIDULPH.

What's the time, Luigi? I haven't a watch on.

LUIGI.

Time, Colonel? [*Looking at his watch.*] Twenty to three.

STIDULPH.

No later? [*Sitting on the settee on the right, with a sigh.*] Oh, dear!

[*One of the waiters goes out, in obedience to a direction from LUIGI, at the door on the left as HENEAGE enters with ENID, GRIMWOOD with NITA, and VON RETTENMAYER with MRS. STIDULPH at the right-hand door at the back. A wisp of hair has fallen over HENEAGE'S forehead, GRIMWOOD looks somewhat downcast, and VON RETTENMAYER is obviously bored by MRS. STIDULPH.*]

ENID.

[*To HENEAGE, walking across to the left.*] Never been to Ostend! You've never been born, then. I'm counting the hours to my holiday. [*Sitting in the chair on the nearer side of the fireplace.*] Hôtel de la Plage. Why don't you run over while I'm there?

NITA.

[*To GRIMWOOD, following ENID.*] My dear boy, I

give you my solemn word it wasn't you. It was that fool Bertie. Anyhow, it's a rotten old frock. [*Show-
ing a small rent in her skirt to ENID, gaily.*] Pom, pa-
ra, rom, pom, pom!

[HENEAGE and GRIMWOOD go to the counter,
secure a waiter, and return with him to
ENID and NITA. The waiter receives his
orders and presently fetches the ladies
glasses of lemonade.]

MRS. STIDULPH.

[*Whispering to VON RETTENMAYER.*] Well! Did
you ever! Just fancy!

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Absently, looking at ENID.*] I beg your pardon?

MRS. STIDULPH.

Fancy those two girls walking into a room before
us! [*Discovering the fan upon the floor.*] Oh, I do
believe that's my fan!

[VON RETTENMAYER restores the fan to MRS.
STIDULPH as ROPER and GABRIELLE enter
at the door on the left.]

GABRIELLE.

[*To ROPER, in a low, complaining voice.*] It's a
shame of you; that's what it is. You went and put
Lily Parradell into rubber and enabled *her* to make a
bit. She told us so.

ROPER.

Yes; but how long ago?

GABRIELLE.

That's not the point. The point is, it's always Lily Parradell with you; you never do anything for us other girls.

[*She sits upon the nearer settee in the centre and she and ROPER, he standing by her, continue their conversation.*]

MRS. STIDULPH.

[*To VON RETTENMAYER.*] No, thanks; I'm on a diet. Didn't you notice me at supper? [*Moving to the settee on the right.*] Let's sit. [*To STIDULPH.*] Oh, get up. [*STIDULPH rises quickly.*] Why aren't you dancing? If you don't dance, go home and put yourself to bed. You might, for all the good you're doing here.

STIDULPH.

[*With a forced, painful laugh.*] Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*As Mrs. STIDULPH seats herself.*] Blenty of room for you too, Golonel.

STIDULPH.

No, no; I won't inconvenience you.

[*He moves away and VON RETTENMAYER sits beside Mrs. STIDULPH. The waiter who has previously gone out now returns at the door on the left with a tray of ices in paper cases. He goes to the counter for a supply of ice-spoons as FARNCOMBE enters with*]

LILY at the right-hand door at the back.
Her cheeks are flushed, her eyes sparkling.

ROPER.

[*All his attention suddenly directed to LILY and FARNCOMBE.*] Here's Lil!

LILY.

[*Excitedly, seizing STIDULPH's hand.*] You're not dancing, Colonel Stidulph. [*Showing him her programme.*] Dance with me. I'll make one of the others give up a dance for you.

STIDULPH.

[*Going to the counter.*] No, no; I'm too old.

LILY.

Too old for dancing! I shall never be too old for dancing. [*Coming to the nearer settee in the centre, picking up her bouquet, and sitting beside GABRIELLE.*] Ah-h-h-h!

ROPER.

[*To FARNCOMBE, who follows LILY.*] Hul-lo!
 [*Beaming.*] Jolly party, hey, Farncombe?

FARNCOMBE.

[*Boyishly.*] Lovely! [*To LILY.*] May I bring you some lemonade—an ice——?

LILY.

[*Looking up at him.*] You may keep on bringing

me ices till the music starts again. [FARNCOMBE leaves her.] Gabby, wasn't that waltz delicious!

[PALK and SYBIL enter at the door on the left. SYBIL seats herself beside NITA on the fender-stool and PALK fetches her some refreshment.

GABRIELLE.

[To LILY, dreamily.] I say, Lil.

LILY.

What?

GABRIELLE.

How much did you make out of rubber last year through Lal?

LILY.

Rubber, rubber, rubber? Br-r-r-ih! I don't know. [To ROPER.] How much?

ROPER.

Four-fifty.

GABRIELLE.

There!

LILY.

I did my house up with it—gave the job to young Charlie Ramsden who's gone in for decorating—

ROPER.

Yes, and blued the whole lot at one go!

LILY.

[Laughing.] Blued it completely. Ha, ha, ha!

[*Singing.*] "What does the blue sea Whisper to me-ee—!" [FARNCOMBE appears at her side with the waiter carrying the ices.] Ices!

ROPER.

[*Leaving* GABRIELLE and, with his hands in his pockets, walking about exultingly.] Ices, sweets or chocolates, full piano-score! Hul-lo, here! Ha, ha, ha!

[GLYNN and OLGA and DE CASTRO and EVANGELINE have entered at the right-hand door at the back. OLGA and EVANGELINE seat themselves upon the further settee in the centre and GLYNN and DE CASTRO summon a waiter to attend upon them. SHIRLEY and FLO now enter at the door on the left and go to the counter. At the same moment SMYTHE, COOLING, and TAVISH enter at the right-hand door at the back, SMYTHE smoking a huge cigar. They also stand at the counter and are served with drinks by LUIGI. LILY and GABRIELLE having each taken an ice, the waiter with the ices moves away and offers his ices to the other ladies. Another waiter carries round a tray on which are a box of cigarettes and the spirit-lamp, and the bearded waiter moves about with the dish of sandwiches. Some of the ladies light cigarettes, a few of the men take sandwiches.]

COOLING.

[*As he enters with* SMYTHE and TAVISH.] Haw,

haw, haw! You're wonderful, Chief. [To TAVISH.]
The Chief's in great form, Willy. [To STIDULPH.]
Colonel, listen to the Chief.

MRS. STIDULPH.

[To VON RETTENMAYER, *confidentially*.] Of course, this is strictly between ourselves—though I almost hinted as much to Smythe—but the fact is the Pandora isn't in the least what it *was*, Karl.

VON RETTENMAYER.

Noding is what it was, my dear Dolly, and nobody.

MRS. STIDULPH.

[*Fanning herself*.] I suppose he can't find the artists; *that's* it. If you don't have the artists—! [*Shutting up her fan*.] You recollect my "Polly Taggart" in *The Merry Milliner*?

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Stifling a yawn*.] Gharming; gharming.

[FARNCOMBE is bending over LILY while she is eating her ice and they are talking lightly but intently. GABRIELLE, finding that she is "out of it," rises with a pout and, carrying her plate, joins the ladies and men who are at the fireplace. BLAND enters with JIMMIE at the door on the left.]

MRS. STIDULPH.

[To VON RETTENMAYER.] I hate blowing my own trumpet, but I was looking through my press-cuttings

only yesterday. *I've* never seen such notices as I had for "Polly Taggart."

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Closing his eyes.*] Vavourable?

MRS. STIDULPH.

Favourable! They make me blush to read them. Stupid of me; but they make me blush, positively.

[JIMMIE comes to LILY, BLAND following her. On her way she sees the handkerchief and powder-puff lying upon the floor.]

JIMMIE.

Why, *there* it is! [*Picking up the handkerchief and puff, and rubbing the puff, which is an extremely ragged one, over her nose—singing sentimentally.*] "There are no friends like the old friends, The constant, tried, and true;—" [*Sitting beside LILY.*] Room for a little 'un?

[LILY, without interrupting her talk with FARNCOMBE, lays her hand on JIMMIE'S for a moment.]

BLAND.

[*To JIMMIE.*] Bring you anything?

JIMMIE.

[*Wrapping the puff in the handkerchief tenderly and slipping it into her bosom.*] A liqueur of petrol and a lucifer-match.

BLAND.

[*Leaving her.*] Oh, go on!

MRS. STIDULPH.

[*To VON RETTENMAYER.*] And then to give it all up, as I was idiot enough to do when I married, and for a life as dull as ditch-water! If ever a woman sacrificed herself in this world——!

[*FULKERSON and DAPHNE enter at the door on the left and hurry to the counter.*

FULKERSON.

[*Boisterously.*] 'Time! Time! [*To those standing at the counter.*] 'Low me. 'Low me. [*To LUIGI.*] Glass o' lemonade and a whiskey-and-soda. Quick with the whiskey-and-soda.

MRS. STIDULPH.

[*To VON RETTENMAYER.*] But I don't intend to stick to *that* arrangement. If I can't get back into the theatres, there are the halls! I was telling the Colonel this morning——

ROPER.

[*Appearing before MRS. STIDULPH, his programme in his hand.*] Ours, Dolly.

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Rising with alacrity.*] Aha! [*Bowing to MRS. STIDULPH.*] I yield with reluctance.

[*ROPER sits beside MRS. STIDULPH and VON RETTENMAYER hastens to ENID.*

ROPER.

[*To* MRS. STIDULPH.] Another waltz.

DAPHNE.

[*To* HENEAGE, *who is claiming her.*] Wait till I've finished my drink, Stewie.

BLAND.

[*To* NITA.] Nita.

NITA.

No; this is with Douglas.

BLAND.

Nothing o' the sort.

NITA.

[*Referring to her programme.*] You're correct; my mistake.

DE CASTRO.

[*Coming to* GABRIELLE *who is talking to* SYBIL.] Gabth.

GABRIELLE.

[*Dolefully.*] Oh, you again!

DE CASTRO.

[*Mortified.*] Afraid tho.

[*The sound of distant music is again heard, and there is a great deal of bustle as the men claim their partners. TAVISH goes to EVANGELINE, GRIMWOOD to FLO, PALK and GLYNN to OLGA and SYBIL, and gradually the assemblage melts away.*]

FULKERSON.

[*Coming to JIMMIE, who is conning her programme, and standing before her—reading from his programme.*]
 "False. *Cri dee cure.*"

JIMMIE.

[*With withering accuracy.*] "False. *Cri de cœur.*"

FULKERSON.

[*Wagging his head.*] Very likely. Come along, Jimmie.

JIMMIE.

[*Rising and shaking herself out.*] Jane to you, if you please.

FULKERSON.

Tosh!

JIMMIE.

I was christened Jane, *Herbert.*

FULKERSON.

Well, I wasn't at the christening, see.

JIMMIE.

No; but if you are not more careful of those feet of yours while you're waltzing, you *will* be at my funeral.

[*She takes his arm and they go out at the door on the left. SMYTHE, STIDULPH, COOLING, and SHIRLEY follow, talking together. All the couples have now disappeared except VON RETTENMAYER and ENID and FARN-COMBE and LILY. VON RETTENMAYER and*

ENID are at the counter, where LUIGI is giving VON RETTENMAYER a glass of champagne, and the waiters are busying themselves in collecting the soiled glasses, plates, etc., which have been left upon the mantel-piece and chairs. The bearded waiter comes to LILY and she hands him her plate.

FARNCOMBE.

[To LILY.] Shall we go down?

[She rises, leaving her bouquet upon the settee, and is about to put her arm through FARNCOMBE'S when she checks herself and looks at her programme.

LILY.

[Frowning.] Tsss!

FARNCOMBE.

Eh?

LILY.

[In a low voice.] One, two, three, four—! Why, this—this is our fifth dance!

FARNCOMBE.

[Softly.] Yes.

LILY.

Five out of eight!

FARNCOMBE.

[Looking at his programme.] And 10, 12, and 14 are mine, too.

LILY.

[*With a movement of her shoulders, accepting his arm.*] How unfair!

FARNCOMBE.

[*As they go to the right-hand door at the back.*] Unfair?

LILY.

To the others. I can't think what made me so thoughtless.

[*They disappear. Two of the waiters carry out the soiled glasses, etc.; another follows with the ices, and the bearded waiter with the strawberries-and-cream. After a while, LUIGI also withdraws.*

ENID.

[*Leaving the counter with VON RETTENMAYER.*] Well, what did you say to him?

VON RETTENMAYER.

I told him the biece wants lifding in the second aggd and that he ought to gif you anoder dance.

ENID.

[*On the right.*] What did he say?

VON RETTENMAYER.

He will think it over!

ENID.

[*Scornfully.*] Ha! That's Smythe's invariable formula, cunning old fox!

VON RETTENMAYER.

But we are to dalk about it lader. I am waiding to ged him alone.

ENID.

Pff! *You* won't get him alone, you stupid; *he'll* take precious good care of that. [*Finding that LUIGI and the waiters have departed, and walking across to the left.*] Ah, but it isn't dancing my mind's dwelling on just now, dear boy.

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Following her.*] Nod?

ENID.

It's rest I'm yearning for—my holiday!—rest for my weary bones. [*Turning to him without a sign of disturbance.*] Karl, I'm simply bursting with rage.

VON RETTENMAYER.

Rage?

ENID.

That wretched hotel at Ostend—the Plage! They've the confounded impudence to ask me a hundred-and-twenty-five francs a day for two cubby-holes on the third floor, for my aunt and me.

VON RETTENMAYER.

Monsdrous. [*With a shrug.*] But Ostend is—Ostend.

ENID.

Thanks for the information. Is that all the sympathy you can offer?

VON RETTENMAYER.

Bardon. [*Humbly.*] There may be gheaper hodels.

ENID.

Where the common people pay for their beds and meals with Cook's coupons! [*Sitting upon the arm of the further settee in the centre and swinging her feet.*] Oh, it doesn't matter. I suppose it'll have to be Swanage, or some brisk resort of that description. [*Sighing.*] So be it! [*Humming.*] Tra, lal, lal, la——!

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Sitting on the nearer settee in the centre, close to her, with an anxious expression.*] A hundred-and-twenty-five frangs a day?

ENID.

Including nothing—absolutely nothing!

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Biting his nails.*] Prezisely! There's the eading and drinking.

ENID.

One can't starve, that's certain.

VON RETTENMAYER.

Which would amount to——?

ENID.

[*Watching him out of the corner of her eye.*] I believe aunt and I could manage to feed ourselves on forty francs a day—or fifty—at a pinch.

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*His face growing longer and longer.*] A hundred-and-twenty-five—and fifty——

ENID.

A hundred-and-seventy-five. [*Stroking his hair with a finger.*] Call it two hundred.

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Leaning back appalled.*] Fifty-sigs bounds a weeg!

ENID.

Sixty, in round figures.

VON RETTENMAYER.

For a fortnight?

ENID.

Oh, no, dear; a fortnight's no use.

VON RETTENMAYER.

But one begomes sig of a blace adfer a fortnight.

ENID.

If you only go for enjoyment; not if you go for rest—rest.

VON RETTENMAYER.

Three weegs, then?

ENID.

A month. Smythe gives me the whole of August.

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Passing his hand across his forehead.*] A month!

ENID.

[*Rising and carefully picking a piece of fluff from her skirt.*] We're losing this dance. Shall we have a turn?

[*He gets to his feet with some difficulty and then faces her.*

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Breathing heavily.*] Enid——

ENID.

[*Guilelessly.*] Yes?

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Putting his heels together and bowing to her.*] If you would permit me to be your banker during your sday at Ostend—four weegs——

ENID.

Karl

VON RETTENMAYER.

I should be mosd gradified.

ENID.

[*Going to him.*] I couldn't. Such an obligation!

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Bowing again.*] On my side.

ENID.

[*Giving him her hands.*] Of course, I'd defray my travelling expenses, and tips and incidentals——

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Raising her hands to his lips.*] Ah!——

ENID.

Not a penny of those should fall on you. [*Withdrawing her hands quickly and backing away from him.*] H'sh!

[*STIDULPH enters at the door on the left and again wanders to the counter.*

STIDULPH.

[*Taking another cigarette.*] You're missing a very pretty waltz, Miss Moncreiff.

ENID.

[*Going to the door on the left, VON RETTENMAYER following her.*] I was just saying so to the Baron.

[*ENID and VON RETTENMAYER disappear. STIDULPH lights his cigarette and is leaving the counter when GABRIELLE and DE CASTRO enter at the right-hand door at the back, DE CASTRO looking exceedingly sulky.*

STIDULPH.

[*To GABRIELLE and DE CASTRO.*] Ah, Miss Kato; ah, Sam! A pleasant party, eh?

DE CASTRO.

[*Shortly.*] Yeth. [STIDULPH goes out at the right-hand door at the back. DE CASTRO crosses to the left and then turns to GABRIELLE.] Dam pleathant party!

GABRIELLE.

[*Dolefully.*] Well, don't make a scene.

DE CASTRO.

Thene! I'm not makin' a thene. Walkin' away from me in the middle of a danthe and leavin' me thtandin' thtarin' after you like a detherted child! You're makin' the thene!

GABRIELLE.

I'm very sorry.

DE CASTRO.

I'm jutht ath good a waltzther ath anyone here, and better than motht. [*Waving his arms.*] If you're tired of me, announthe the fact quietly. Don't go and wipe your booth on me in public, becauthe that hurtth my pride.

GABRIELLE.

[*With a little twist of her body.*] I can't do more than apologise. First time I've ever done *that* to a man.

DE CASTRO.

[*Coming to her, mollified.*] I don't athk it, Gabth; I don't athk it. All I athk—

GABRIELLE.

[*Sitting on the nearer settee in the centre.*] If I'm rude,

it's owing to my low spirits. I'm so shockingly low-spirited.

DE CASTRO.

I know you are, and I make allowanthes for yer. I repeat, all I athk——

GABRIELLE.

[*Gazing at vacancy.*] Mine's a strange nature. *On the stage, I'm liveliness itself——!*

DE CASTRO.

A perfect little lump o' talent! I've been tellin' Carlton tho—perthuadin' him to introduthe an extra thong for you in Act Two.

GABRIELLE.

[*Looking at DE CASTRO.*] You have?

DE CASTRO.

Yeth.

GABRIELLE.

Did he promise to think it over?

DE CASTRO.

Hith exthact wordth!

GABRIELLE.

[*With a hollow laugh.*] Ha, ha, ha! [*Resuming her former attitude.*] As I was remarking, I'm a mass of inconsistency. *On the stage the embodiment of elfish fun——*

DE CASTRO.

That wath in the *Mail*.

GABRIELLE.

[*Nodding.*] In the *Mail*. *Off* the stage, I'm a sufferer from what's called the artistic temperature—no—temperament——

DE CASTRO.

[*Uncomfortably, putting her shoulder.*] Po' little girl; po' little girl!

GABRIELLE.

[*Her melancholy increasing.*] Sometimes I've an idea that if I had a motor-car of my *own* I should feel easier and happier.

DE CASTRO.

[*With a change of tone.*] What d'ye mean—motor-car of yer own? Mine'th alwayth at your dithpothal, ithn't it?

GABRIELLE.

[*Shaking her head.*] That's not the same thing. Whenever I have yours out, I'm weighed down by a sense of borrowing.

DE CASTRO.

Well, if I gave you a new car, you'd be weighed down by a thenth of my havin' paid for it.

GABRIELLE.

At first I should, but not for long. Seeing my family crest on the door-panels, instead of your

monogram, 'ud help me to forget you'd had anything to do with it. [*Gloomily.*] Of course, it 'ud only be an experiment. It might cheer me up, or it mightn't.

[*The music ceases. A waiter carrying a tray enters at the door on the left, goes behind the counter, and mixes some drinks.*

DE CASTRO.

[*After a pause, loosening his collar—in a low voice.*] Here! We'd better ditch this experiment. [*Glancing over his shoulder at the waiter.*] Let 'th come and thit in the pit.

GABRIELLE.

[*Rising.*] I can't argue; my head's too bad for that.

DE CASTRO.

[*Leading her to the double-door.*] I don't want to argue; I thimply want to arrive at an underthandin'. Thuppothin' I buy you a car, an I to be made an arth of at the nexth danthe we happen to meet at—yeth or no?—

[*They go out on to the landing and disappear as FULKERSON hurries in at the right-hand door at the back. His eyes are rather glassy and his utterance is a little thick.*

FULKERSON.

[*To the waiter, joining him behind the counter.*] Hi! Wake up, there! Gla'sodawa'erf' misspirc'h' nth' stage. [*Distinctly.*] Misspirc'h—on th' stage—gla'—sodawa'er. I'll have a whiskey. Wh'sth whiskey? Which—is—the—whiskey? Than'g. [*Pouring some whiskey*

into a tumbler.] You take sodaw'er t' Misspurch; I'll mix m'own whiskey. Loo' sharp, sodaw'er Misspurch. [*The waiter goes out with the drinks and FULKERSON, glass in hand, comes to the nearer side of the counter. He swallows his drink greedily, singing to himself between the gulps.*] "Oh, the gals! Oh, the gals! I am awfully fond of the gals! [*Putting his empty glass upon the counter and making for the door on the left.*] Be they ebon or blond, Of the gals I am fond; I am dreadfully fond of the gals!"

[*He vanishes as FARNCOMBE and LILY enter at the right-hand door at the back. There is an air of constraint and uneasiness about the girl. She comes to the nearer settee in the centre and again picks up her bouquet. FARNCOMBE follows her. They talk in subdued voices and with frequent pauses.*

FARNCOMBE.

Another ice?

LILY.

[*Rearranging a rose, almost inaudibly.*] No, thanks.

FARNCOMBE.

[*After a pause.*] I—I wish I had given you a bouquet instead of a big, ugly basket.

LILY.

Why?

FARNCOMBE.

You—you might have brought it to the theatre, as you have that one, and carried it about with you.

LILY.

[*Coldly.*] I didn't bring this to the theatre.

FARNCOMBE.

No?

LILY.

I found it with a lot of other flowers at the stage-door. It's from the gallery boys—[*looking at him for a moment steadily*—and I attach some value to it.

[*The bearded waiter enters at the right-hand door at the back, takes a box of cigars from the counter, and goes out at the door on the left. LILY walks away from FARNCOMBE and seats herself upon the further settee in the centre.*

FARNCOMBE.

[*After the waiter has withdrawn, producing his programme.*] Number Nine. "*Two Step. Mind the Paint.*" [To LILY.] Of course, you—you are engaged for this?

LILY.

And you, surely?

FARNCOMBE.

No, I—I kept it open, in case—in case——

LILY.

[*Decidedly.*] I dance it with Morrie.

FARNCOMBE.

Mr. Cooling?

LILY.

Morrie Cooling.

FARNCOMBE.

[*After another pause, sitting, behind her, upon the nearer settee.*] Miss Parradell.

LILY.

Well?

FARNCOMBE.

I wonder whether Mr. Cooling would let you off.

LILY.

I shouldn't dream of asking him.

FARNCOMBE.

No, but—may I?

LILY.

[*Haughtily.*] I beg you'll do nothing of the sort.

FARNCOMBE.

Forgive me.

[*There is a further pause and then she turns to him.*]

LILY.

Why I spoke so—so sharply to you—was——

FARNCOMBE.

You didn't speak sharply to me.

LILY.

Was because I've been very nasty with Morrie—

wrote him a furious letter—and I want to make it up to him.

FARNCOMBE.

Ah, yes.

LILY.

I called him a pig, and other things; I hate myself for it.

FARNCOMBE.

A pig?

LILY.

[*Smiling.*] Still, that's no reason why I should be nasty with *you*.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Laughingly.*] And call *me* a pig.

LILY.

[*Impulsively, kneeling upon the settee so that she may compare her programme with his.*] Look here! Fifteen—the last but one. Are you fixed up for Fifteen?

FARNCOMBE.

No.

LILY.

No!

FARNCOMBE.

I kept it open—in case——

LILY.

[*Merrily.*] Ha, ha —! [*Checking herself, severely.*] I *might* be able to give you Fifteen. [FARNCOMBE

scribbles on his programme eagerly.] Don't count on it, please ; but it's booked to Mr. Fulkerson, and Bertie's not always to be depended upon at that hour.

FARNCOMBE.

Thank you—thank you—thank you. [*She resumes her seat and he jumps up and goes to her.*] That reminds me. May I ask who is going to see you home, Miss Parradell ?

LILY.

See me home ?

FARNCOMBE.

It would be an honour that I should—appreciate—more than I can—find words to express.

LILY.

[*Rising, sternly.*] I am very much obliged to you. [*Walking away from him again.*] I dare say Mr. Roper will see me home—and Mr. de Castro—and Mr. Bland——

FARNCOMBE.

[*Following her, unhappily.*] I—I hope—I—I hope I haven't offended you.

LILY.

Not in the least ; [*in a frigid tone*] only I am in the habit of relying on old friends for those little services.

[*STIDULPH enters from the landing and again wanders to the counter and to the cigarettes. The "Mind the Paint" air, to the time of a Two Step, is played in the distance.*

FARNCOMBE.

[*Bowing to LILY slightly and drawing himself up.*] Shall I—take you to Mr. Cooling?

LILY.

[*With dignity, inclining her head.*] Will you? [*She is putting her hand through his arm when the look upon his face softens her. She drops her voice to a whisper.*] Have I hurt you?

FARNCOMBE.

Oh, I deserve the rebuke.

LILY.

No, you don't. [*Gently.*] You may leave me at my door, with the others, if it will give you any satisfaction.

[*As they walk to the door on the left, they are met by COOLING.*]

COOLING.

[*To LILY, breathlessly.*] Haw! Here you are!

LILY.

[*Leaving FARNCOMBE, her manner altering completely.*] Come on, Morrie! [*Her feet moving to the music.*] Tra, la, la! Tra, la, la! [*Giving her bouquet to FARNCOMBE.*] Hi-i-i-i-i! Bring my flowers!

COOLING AND LILY.

Tra, la, la! Tra, la, la——!

[*They run out, half dancing.*]

STIDULPH.

[*Calling to FARNCOMBE, who is following them.*]
Lord Farncombe!

FARNCOMBE.

Yes?

STIDULPH.

[*Going to him.*] Will you spare me a moment?

FARNCOMBE.

[*A little impatiently.*] Er—certainly.

STIDULPH.

[*Laying a shaky hand on FARNCOMBE'S arm and leading him away from the door.*] Excuse me for what I'm going to say to you. I—I know your father—knew him very well years ago—and your mother. [*With deep feeling.*] My boy—my dear boy——

FARNCOMBE.

[*Surprised.*] Colonel?

STIDULPH.

I—I—I'm sorry to find you in this set.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Stiffly.*] What do you mean?

STIDULPH.

Don't be angry with me. I'm an old man—and an old fool; but it's from the fools that the useful lessons are to be learned.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Withdrawing his arm from STIDULPH.*] I really don't understand you.

STIDULPH.

Try to. Not now—another time; when this music isn't exciting you, nor these pretty women. Think it out by yourself! You're at the beginning of your career, my boy. Remember me—the old fool who's brought *his* to a miserable end—and that I cautioned you—cautioned you——!

[*LUIGI hurries in at the door on the left, followed by a waiter carrying a tray, and by the waiter with the beard.*

LUIGI.

[*Laughing.*] He, he, he, he! [*Behind the counter, preparing drinks.*] Look out, gentlemen; you are losing it all. They are having a romp—a fine lark. [*FARNCOMBE goes out at the door on the left.*] Make haste, Colonel; make haste! [*STIDULPH goes out, slowly, at the right-hand door at the back.*] Whiskey-and-soda for Mr. Tavish; liqueur of brandy—Mr. Grimwood. [*The waiter carrying the tray goes out with the drinks at the door on the left.*] Ha, ha, ha! [*Singing to the music.*] Tra, la, la! Tra, la, la——!

[*LUIGI is following the waiter who has carried out the tray when the bearded waiter, coming to the nearer settee in the centre, calls to him.*

THE BEARDED WAITER.

[*Sitting upon the settee, gruffly.*] Luigi.

LUIGI.

[*Halting.*] Eh?

THE BEARDED WAITER.

[*Taking out a handful of money and selecting some gold from it.*] Here! [*Putting the gold into LUIGI'S palm.*] For your chaps.

LUIGI.

Oh, you are spoiling them.

THE BEARDED WAITER.

[*Giving some more gold pieces to LUIGI.*] For you.

LUIGI.

[*Bowing low.*] Thank you very much. [*With a polite grin, as he disposes of the coins in different pockets.*] Hope you have enjoyed yourself, Captain.

THE BEARDED WAITER.

[*Speaking in the voice of JEYES.*] Thoroughly. [*Quietly, between his teeth.*] Warm work, though! [*Rising slowly, like a man with stiff joints.*] I'll be off now, with your permission.

LUIGI.

See you at lunch, Captain?

JEYES.

Probably. [*Nodding.*] Good-night. Good morning. [*He slouches away to the door on the left and there stops, listening. There is the sound of people approach-*

ing, singing uproariously and shouting and laughing.]
 Hullo!

LUIGI.

[*At his elbow.*] Ho, ho, ho, ho!

[*LUIGI goes out into the corridor and JEYES retreats behind the counter. The noise increases and presently FULKERSON rushes in, flourishing his arms manly. He is followed by GLYNN and SHIRLEY who are carrying LILY upon their interlocked hands, and by PALK who is helping to support her. Then come HENEAGE and NITA, GRIMWOOD and DAPHNE, TAVISH and FLO, VON RETTENMAYER and ENID, DE CASTRO and GABRIELLE, ROPER and MRS. STIDULPH, FARNCOMBE and JIMMIE, BLAND and EVANGELINE, COOLING and SYBIL, and SMYTHE and OLGA. Singing the chorus of the "Mind the Paint" song, and dancing to it wildly, they circle the saloon twice, go out at the right hand door at the back, return at the door on the left, and finally disappear through the double-door and along the landing. The waiters, who have brought up the rear of the procession, gather, with LUIGI, in the left-hand corner, clapping their hands, and STIDULPH returns, entering at the right-hand door at the back.*]

LILY.

[*Waving her bouquet and shrieking with laughter.*]
 Ha, ha, ha, ha! Don't drop me! Don't drop me!

HENEAGE AND GRIMWOOD.

[*Yelling.*] Whoop! Whoop!

FULKERSON.

[*Deliriously, endeavouring to stand upon his head.*]
Wh-o-o-op!

JIMMIE.

[*Breaking from the rank and jumping on to the further settee—singing.*] "Mind the paint! Mind the paint! A girl is not a sinner just because she's not a saint!——"

LILY.

Ha, ha, ha! You'll drop me! Oh——!

[*As the procession passes out of sight, followed by LUIGI and the waiters, JEYES departs at the door on the left and STIDULPH once more goes to the counter and lights a cigarette.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

THE THIRD ACT

The scene is LILY'S boudoir—a room upon the second floor of her house, adjoining her bedroom. The decorations, though delicate, are gay, with a good deal of pink in them.

In the wall facing the spectator are two doors, one on the left, the other in the centre. The left-hand door opens into the room from the landing, where the staircase is shown; the centre door admits to the bedroom. In the right-hand wall there are two sash-windows giving a view of the tops of trees growing in a square; in the opposite wall, the grate hidden by a low, painted screen, is the fireplace.

A prettily designed "fitment" runs along the left-hand wall and the further wall, taking in the fireplace and doors as part of its scheme. On either side of the fireplace there is a cupboard with drawers beneath it; between the door on the left and the door in the centre is a similar cupboard; and on the right of the centre door, extending to the right-hand wall, there is a wardrobe with sliding doors. The cupboard doors are glazed and curtained in pink silk.

In the middle of the room, a little to the right, there is a large and comfortable settee, and on the

left of the settee is a table littered with books, magazines, a scent-atomizer, a small silver-framed mirror, a case of manicure instruments, a box of cigarettes and a match-stand, and other odds and ends. Behind the table there is a fauteuil-stool, and on the right of the table a cosy arm-chair. A second arm-chair stands apart, between the table in the centre and the fireplace.

On the extreme left of the room, on the nearer side of the fireplace, there is a box-ottoman; on the other side of the room, by the nearer window, are a small writing-table and chair; standing across the right-hand corner, the key-board towards the further window, are a cottage-piano and a music-stool; and at the back of the piano there is another small chair, with some soiled gloves upon it.

A quantity of music is heaped untidily on the top of the piano; one of the wardrobe doors is open, revealing some dresses hanging within; and the edge of a lace petticoat, with its insertion of coloured ribbon, peeps out from under the carelessly-closed lid of the box-ottoman. Two milliner's hat-boxes are on the floor by the ottoman, and a pair of satin slippers are lying, one here, one there, under the centre table.

The window-blinds are down but the daylight is seen through them.

[The door on the left opens and LILY, still carrying her bouquet, enters and makes straight for the windows and draws up the blinds, letting in the clear, morning light. She is followed by ENID, GABRIELLE, DAPHNE, and JIMMIE and they by FARN-

COMBE, VON RETTENMAYER, DE CASTRO, ROPER, FULKERSON, and BLAND. *They are all pale and haggard, and slightly dishevelled, but everybody seems broad awake except DAPHNE, who is borne down by sleepiness. Some of the men are smoking.*

LILY.

[*Laying her bouquet upon the table in the centre as she crosses to the windows—to the women.*] Come in, dears; [*drawing up the blind of the nearer window*] come in, boys. Take off your things for a minute.

FULKERSON.

[*Whose inebriety has reached the argumentative stage.*] Working classhes! Don' talk t' me 'bout th' working classhes!

JIMMIE.

H'sh! Shut up, Bertie.

FULKERSON.

I'm s'h'ick o' th' vo'y mention o' th' name—working classhes!

JIMMIE.

Sit on his head, somebody. We shall wake Ma and the servants.

LILY.

[*Taking off her wrap and hanging it up in the wardrobe.*] Don't worry; you won't wake *my* servants. And mother's bound to hear us; she sleeps so lightly when I'm out,

DAPHNE.

[*Gaping violently.*] Oh-h-h-h!

JIMMIE.

[*Clapping her hand over DAPHNE'S mouth.*] Manners!

FULKERSON.

[*Depositing his overcoat and hat upon the fauteuil-stool.*] One 'ud 'magine th' working-man'sh th' on'y per-shon who ever does day'sh work! Ridiculush!

VON RETTENMAYER AND BLAND.

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

DE CASTRO.

Thome truth in what Bertie'th thayin', though.
For inthtanthe——

FULKERSON.

[*With great disgust.*] Br'ish working-man!

ROPER.

By Jove, yes! When I think o' the work Mr. Lionel Hesketh Roper manages to dispose of in the course of a day——!

[*VON RETTENMAYER and DE CASTRO have placed their overcoats and hats upon the chair at the back of the piano and FARNCOMBE, BLAND, and ROPER have piled theirs on the arm-chair on the left. ENID and GABRIELLE throw their wraps upon the settee, DAPHNE drops hers upon the box-ottoman, and*

JIMMIE puts hers over the arm of the chair by the centre table.

LILY.

[*To everybody.*] I'll just run upstairs and tell mother that all's serene. [*She goes to the door on the left; FARNCOMBE, BLAND, and ROPER get in each other's way in their desire to open it for her.*] If any of you want a drink, you must hunt for it yourselves in the dining-room. [*To ROPER.*] You play host, Uncle Lal.

[*She disappears, turning to the left and ascending the stairs.*]

ROPER.

[*Briskly.*] Now, then, give your orders, gents! [*Coming forward.*] Ladies, don't all speak at once.

FULKERSON.

[*Making for the door.*] I'll have sma' whiskeyan' soda.

[*He goes along the landing and down the stairs.*]

BLAND.

[*Following him.*] No, no! Bertie! Bertie——!

JIMMIE.

[*Seated in the arm-chair by the centre table—to ROPER.*] Stop it. We'll have trouble enough to get that boy home as it is.

[*ROPER hurries out after BLAND and FULKERSON.*

VON RETTENMAYER and DE CASTRO also move to the door,

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*To ENID, who is sitting with GABRIELLE on the settee.*]
Enid——?

ENID.

A glass of soda-water.

GABRIELLE.

Same for me, Von.

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*To Jimmie.*] Jimmie——?

JIMMIE.

No, thanks.

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Looking down upon DAPHNE, who has curled herself up on the box-ottoman and is already asleep—sentimentally.*] Baby—baby——

DAPHNE.

[*Half sighing, half moaning.*] Ah-h-h-h!

JIMMIE.

[*To VON RETTENMAYER.*] Don't disturb her. Let her have her snooze in peace.

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Still contemplating DAPHNE.*] Shall I bring you your boddle, you preddy liddle baby?

ENID.

[*Annoyed.*] Don't be an idiot, Karl. [*To DE CASTRO, who is talking to FARNCOMBE.*] Sam, will you fetch me some soda-water?

VOX RETTENMAYER.

[To ENID, *bestirring himself.*] I beg pardon.

[*He goes out, with DE CASTRO. ENID has taken the mirror from the table and now looks at herself in it.*

ENID.

What a sight! [To GABRIELLE.] I wonder whether Lil would mind me going into her bedroom?

GABRIELLE.

[*Taking the mirror from ENID.*] Of course she wouldn't. [*Viewing herself with dismay.*] Oh, I'm yellower than you!

[*She jumps up, throwing the mirror upon the settee, and goes to the door in the centre. ENID follows her and the two girls open the door narrowly and withdraw. JIMMIE rises and picks up the mirror.*

JIMMIE.

[*With one knee upon the settee, surveying herself.*] Ugh, you lovely creature! [*Glancing at FARNCOMBE as she readjusts a comb, and finding that he is gazing at her earnestly.*] Turn your face to the wall, please; I'm about to use my puff.

[*Suddenly, with rapid movements, he shuts the door on the left, gives a quick look at DAPHNE, assures himself that the centre door is closed, and comes to JIMMIE. She stares at him in astonishment.*

FARNCOMBE.

[*Standing at the back of the settee—in a low voice.*] Miss Birch, you're Miss Parradell's friend—her great friend. Will you be a friend of mine too, and do me a service?

JIMMIE.

[*Startled.*] It—it all depends——

FARNCOMBE.

Beg her to allow me to remain behind, with you, for a few minutes after the others have gone.

JIMMIE.

Remain—you and I?

FARNCOMBE.

And then, if she will, will you wait in the next room while I speak to her? Miss Birch, I—I must speak to her.

JIMMIE.

W-w-wouldn't—to-morrow——?

FARNCOMBE.

It is to-morrow *now*. It's day.

JIMMIE.

[*Dropping her eyes.*] She's tired.

FARNCOMBE.

Five minutes—no longer. [*Entreatingly.*] Won't you try to arrange it for me?

JIMMIE.

[*Pursing her lips.*] H'm! *I'd* stay; delighted.
[*Demurely.*] It doesn't matter how tired *I* feel.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Contritely.*] I'm a brute!

JIMMIE.

But I really think the *arranging* is your job, Lord Farncombe.

FARNCOMBE.

I know I should make a bungle of it with all these people round me, and attract attention. *You're* clever.

JIMMIE.

[*Raising her eyes to his, abruptly.*] Look here! Do I guess correctly?

FARNCOMBE.

What——?

[*She pulls him towards her and whispers into his ear. He nods. She whispers again, breathlessly, and then releases him.*]

JIMMIE.

Eh? Eh?

FARNCOMBE.

[*Drawing back and facing her, firmly.*] Yes.

JIMMIE.

[*Walking away, in a flutter.*] Oh! Oh! Oh!

FARNCOMBE.

You'll help me? [*She pauses, deliberating.*] You'll help me?

JIMMIE.

[*Returning to him, with an air of prudence.*] I tell you what I will do. [*Pointing to the writing-table.*] Scribble her a note—a line—and I'll give it to her. That won't attract attention. I've no objection to do that for you. Hurry up! [*He sits at the writing-table and searches for writing materials.*] In the drawer. [*He opens a drawer and takes out a sheet of note-paper. Standing at the other side of the table, she selects a pen and hands it to him.*] A "J" suit you?

FARNCOMBE.

[*Taking the pen from her.*] What shall I say?

JIMMIE.

Ho, ho! Well, I never! [*He writes.*] Oh, but it isn't exactly a love-letter, is it? Simply say—what was the expression you used just now?—"will you allow me to remain behind for a few minutes with Miss Birch after the others have gone?"

FARNCOMBE.

[*Writing.*] Thank you.

JIMMIE.

[*With a little wriggle.*] Call me Jimmie if you like.

FARNCOMBE.

Thank you.

JIMMIE.

[*Knitting her brow thoughtfully.*] I suppose you ought to give her an inkling, though—the merest hint—of the *reason*, oughtn't you?

FARNCOMBE.

[*Looking up.*] Ought I?

JIMMIE.

Well, you don't want her to think it's only to chat about the weather——!

FARNCOMBE.

For heaven's sake, don't chaff me! [*writing*] “—after the others have gone?” [*Biting his pen.*] How would this do? “I know I am presuming a lot, but I—I can't leave you—I can't leave you till I—till I have asked you—till I have asked you the most important question a man can put to a woman.”

JIMMIE.

Oh, but that's ideal! [*GABRIELLE reappears.*] Dash these girls! [*To GABRIELLE, whose complexion is much improved.*] Lord Farncombe is writing me out a remedy for freckles. Isn't it sweet of him?

GABRIELLE.

[*Mournfully.*] Freckles! If you want to see a martyr to freckles, knock at *my* door.

[*ENID returns, with lips that are a little too red, as VON RETTENMAYER and DE CASTRO re-enter at the door on the left. They leave the*

door open. VON RETTENMAYER is carrying a syphon of soda-water and DE CASTRO two tumblers. The men put the syphon and tumblers on the centre table and VON RETTENMAYER fills the glasses and he and DE CASTRO hand them to ENID and GABRIELLE.

VON RETTENMAYER.

[To ENID and GABRIELLE.] I hobe we haf nod kept you waiding.

DE CASTRO.

Bertie'th been makin' himthelf a reg'lar nuithanthe downthairth.

ENID.

Poor Bertie! Pity he has this little failing.

GABRIELLE.

[With mild enthusiasm.] Yes, there's not a nicer boy in London than Bertie, bar that.

DE CASTRO.

Flieth to hith head tho!

[The four continue talking. JIMMIE has gone back to FARNCOMBE, who is still writing, and is watching him impatiently.]

JIMMIE.

[To FARNCOMBE, under her breath.] Do be quick!

[Hastily he blots his note and folds it. BLAND, FULKERSON, and ROPER appear on the landing, issuing from the staircase, and

there they are joined by LILY, who comes down the stairs.

FULKERSON.

[*On the landing, to LILY, indignantly.*] Lirry—
Misspa'dell——

JIMMIE.

[*To FARNCOMBE.*] Here she is!

ROPER.

[*To FULKERSON.*] Now, then; have it out with
Lily!

LILY.

What's wrong?

[*FARNCOMBE rises and slips his note into
JIMMIE's hand.*

FULKERSON.

[*To LILY.*] Mosht unjusht'fiable treatmen' 'n th'
part 'f these gen'lemen!

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Listening, with the others at the centre table, to what
is going on upon the landing.*] Ha, ha, ha, ha!

JIMMIE.

[*To FARNCOMBE, over her shoulder.*] Good luck!

BLAND.

[*To LILY.*] The youth is irate with us for cutting
off supplies.

[*LILY enters with FULKERSON; ROPER and*

BLAND *following*. BLAND *strolls over to the piano, laughing*.

FULKERSON.

[*To LILY.*] M' argumen' is this. When a gen'leman'sh invited b' th' lady 'f th' house t' partake 'f refreshmen'—

LILY.

[*To FULKERSON.*] Be quiet, Bertie, or I'll box your ears. [*Joining the group at the centre table.*] Ho, ho! I've had such a wiggling for asking you up. Mother says we girls'll look as ugly as sin on the stage to-night.

ENID.

So we shall—hags.

LILY.

[*Sitting in the arm-chair by the centre table.*] I feel as fresh as paint. [*To GABRIELLE.*] Give me a sip.
[*DE CASTRO hands GABRIELLE'S glass to LILY.*]

FULKERSON.

[*Gazing at DAPHNE stupidly and singing to himself.*] "Oh, the gals! Oh, the gals! I am awfully fond of the gals!—"

VON RETTENMAYER, ROPER, DE CASTRO, ENID AND
GABRIELLE.

[*Chiming in with FULKERSON lightly.*] "Be they ebon or blond, Of the gals I am fond;—"! Ha, ha, ha, ha!

BLAND.

H'sh, h'sh! Ma's quite right. [*Seating himself at the piano.*] One more turn and then let's clear out.

LILY.

[*Jumping up.*] Hurrah! [*To ROPER, as BLAND runs his hands over the key-board.*] Shut the door, Uncle Lal.

VON RETTENMAYER.

Aha! One more durn! [*To ENID.*] Enid——!

FULKERSON.

[*Singing.*] "I am dreadfully fond of the gals!"

ROPER.

[*Closing the door.*] Choose your partners, gents! [*Very softly BLAND plays the melody of a languorous song and instantly VON RETTENMAYER and ENID and DE CASTRO and GABRIELLE dance to it—VON RETTENMAYER and ENID at the back, DE CASTRO and GABRIELLE near the piano.*] Jimmie——!

[*JIMMIE passes LILY to go to ROPER. As she does so, she presses FARNCOMBE'S note into LILY'S palm.*]

JIMMIE.

[*To LILY, in a whisper.*] Rat-tat, says the postman! [*Catching hold of ROPER and swinging him round.*] La, ra, ral, la——!

LILY.

[*To FARNCOMBE, who is standing by the writing-table.*] Lord Farncombe——?

[FARNCOMBE goes to her and they dance together.]

FULKERSON.

[To DAPHNE, tapping her on the shoulder.] Missdure, may I have th' grea' pleasure——? [Shaking her.] Missdure—Missdure——

DAPHNE.

[Starting up.] Oh! [Looking round wildly.] Oh——!

FULKERSON.

[Dancing with her.] Pray 'xcuse th' absence 'f gloves.

DAPHNE.

[Faintly.] Oh! Oh, I—I thought I'd gone to bed!

[With their hands on each other's shoulders, the couples, swaying from side to side, half sing, half murmur, the refrain of the song.]

Moderato.

p

If you would on-ly, on - ly love me ; If you would

mere-ly, mere-ly say, Wait but a lit - tle, lit - tle

for me, I will be yours, be yours some day!

[The refrain is repeated, the dancers droning to it with a buzzing sound, and then BLAND returns to the melody.]

LILY.

[As she dances, recollecting the note she is holding and opening it.] What's this? [Reading the note, her arm resting upon FARNCOMBE'S shoulder.] "Dear Miss Parradell. . . . [glancing at the signature] Farncombe"! [To FARNCOMBE.] From you!

FARNCOMBE.

Yes.

LILY.

[*Reading.*] "Will you allow me to——?"

[*She reads to the end silently, and then she stops dancing and they stand for a moment looking confusedly at each other. Then, with an expressionless face, she slips the note into her dress and they dance again, singing the refrain as before.*

BLAND.

[*At the finish, shutting down the lid of the piano and rising.*] Ladies and gentlemen, the festivities connected with Miss Parradell's birthday are over. [*Leaving the piano.*] Our lives will now resume their normal, serious course.

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Regretfully.*] Ah-h-h-h!

[*The ladies put on their wraps, the men their overcoats, and there is a great deal of stir and chatter. DE CASTRO assists GABRIELLE; VON RETTENMAYER, ENID; FULKERSON, DAPHNE; and FARNCOMBE, JIMMIE. LILY joins in the talk and bustle with forced animation. JIMMIE and FARNCOMBE glance at her, and then, inquiringly, at one another.*

ROPER.

[*Putting on his overcoat with BLAND's help.*] Well,

nobody can say the affair hasn't been a brilliant success; that's one comfort.

GABRIELLE.

Wouldn't be true if they did. [*To DE CASTRO, irritably.*] You've got it inside-out.

LILY.

[*To ENID and GABRIELLE, kneeling upon the settee.*] Ah, yes, haven't we had a splendid, splendid time!

ENID.

Splendid!

VON RETTENMAYER.

A gharming pardy!

DE CASTRO.

Abtholutely A 1!

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Singing.*] "Venus, seinen Nacken beut Dir Dein Sklave, dienstbereit!"

LILY.

[*Running to ROPER and seizing his hands.*] A vote of thanks to Lal for his share in getting it up!

BLAND.

[*Slapping ROPER on the back.*] Bravo, Lal!

SOME OF THE OTHERS.

Bravo, Lal!

LILY.

[*Walking about.*] And to Carlton! Bravo, Carlton!

SOME OF THE OTHERS.

Bravo, Carlton! Bravo, Smythe!

DE CASTRO.

[*Putting on his overcoat.*] Don't forget Morrie Coolin'!

LILY.

No, don't forget Morrie. Dear old Morrie!

SOME OF THE OTHERS.

Bravo, Morrie!

DE CASTRO.

There hathn't been a hitch from thtart to finish, in fact.

LILY.

[*At the nearer side of the table again.*] Not a hitch.

FULKERSON.

[*Remembering his grievance.*] I beg yo' par n—no' a 'itch! [*In difficulties with his overcoat.*] When a gen'leman'sh invited b' th' lady 'f th' house t' partake 'f some refreshmen'—

SOME OF THE OTHERS.

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

GABRIELLE.

[*Coming to LILY and kissing her.*] So long, dear.

[ENID, DAPHNE, and JIMMIE also come to LILY, who embraces them demonstratively, and the men follow.

LILY.

[*To the girls.*] Ta-ta ; ta-ta ; ta-ta ! I won't come down.

ENID.

No, no ; we'll let ourselves out. [*Leaving LILY.*] Till to-night !

LILY.

Till to-night ! [*Shaking hands with the men.*] Ta-ta ; ta-ta ; ta-ta !

THE MEN.

Ta-ta ! Ta-ta ! Ta-ta !

VON RETTENMAYER.

[*Kissing her hand slyly.*] Goddess !

LILY.

[*To BLAND, in a whisper.*] Take care of Bertie. [*Everybody moves to the door, except LILY who remains standing in the middle of the room. Some are on the landing, some in the doorway, when she calls to ROPER and JIMMIE.*] Uncle Lal ! Jimmie ! I want to speak to you two for a second. [*ROPER and JIMMIE detach themselves from the rest and return.*] Oh—and Lord Farncombe ! [*FARNCOMBE also returns and LILY, passing him, goes on to the landing and mixes with the others.*] Be off ; Lord Farncombe and Lal will look after Jimmie. Vincent, you close the front-door. No noise ! *Au revoir, mes enfants !* [*She watches them*

descend the stairs and, her manner softening, comes back into the room.] Lord Farncombe wants to have a quiet talk with me, Uncle Lal—about—about something, and he's asked me to let him remain behind with Jimmie for a few minutes. [*To JIMMIE.*] But there's no necessity for you to wait, dear.

JIMMIE.

Don't consider me.

LILY.

But I do. Go upstairs and tell mother that Lord Farncombe's with me. Say I promise he shan't stay long. [*To ROPER.*] You'll take Jimmie home, won't you, Lal?

ROPER.

[*His eyes bolting.*] W-w-with pleasure.

LILY.

[*To JIMMIE.*] I shall see you again later in the day, perhaps?

JIMMIE.

Rather! [*Throwing her arms round LILY'S neck and pressing her cheek to LILY'S.*] Rather! [*To ROPER, significantly.*] Sit in the hall till I'm ready.

[*She runs out on to the landing, pausing at the door to bestow a parting nod and a smile upon FARNCOMBE, and ascends the stairs.*]

ROPER.

[*In a state of great excitement and exhilaration—to LILY.*] Yes, yes, I won't keep you and—[*winking at her and jerking his head in FARNCOMBE'S direction*]

from your *tête-à-tête*. [*Patting her face gleefully.*] Ha, ha, ha, ha! [*Taking her hand, his own quivering.*] Lil, Uncle Lal you call me, but I've always felt more like a parent towards you—acted as such, hey?

LILY.

Y-y-yes, Lal.

ROPER.

And any happiness that befalls you—any happiness that befalls you—[*choking*] I'll leave it there. God bless yer; God bless yer! [*bustling over to FARNCOMBE who, his hat in his hand, his overcoat on his arm, is standing near the piano*] and God bless you, my lad! [*incoherently*] I'm proud—proud to have the honour—and to have been the means of—the means of—[*wringing FARNCOMBE'S hand*] God bless you both! [*He goes to the door and there finds LILY.*] I—I—I—I'll drop in by-and-by and—and—and inquire after you, my pet.

LILY.

[*Faintly.*] All right, Lal.

ROPER.

[*Patting her face again.*] Ha, ha, ha, ha! [*With a hop.*] Wurr-roo! Stand away from the lift; no more passengers this journey!

[*He waves to FARNCOMBE gaily and departs, closing the door. There is a short silence and then FARNCOMBE places his hat and overcoat upon the chair by the piano and turns to LILY.*]

FARNCOMBE.

[*In a low voice.*] It's awfully kind and gracious of you to have granted my request, and frightfully selfish of me to have made it. I deserve to be kicked.

LILY.

[*Slowly advancing to the table in the centre—avoiding his gaze.*] Is—is Jimmie aware of precisely what's in your note?

FARNCOMBE.

Y-y-yes. [*Drawing nearer to her.*] I hope you won't be angry with me for confiding in her. You see, I—I——

LILY.

[*At the further side of the table, fingering one of the objects upon it.*] And she'll confide in Uncle Lal. [*Shrugging her shoulders.*] Oh, but dear old Lal appears to have summed up the situation pretty accurately as it is. [*With an artificial little laugh.*] Ha, ha, ha! Well, I'm afraid they'll be horribly disappointed, poor wretches.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Blankly.*] Disap-pointed?

LILY.

[*Raising her eyes to his and shaking her head at him.*] You—you silly boy!

FARNCOMBE.

[*Coming to her quickly.*] Ah, please—please don't take that tone with me. I'm no boy. And I'm simply

mad about you. If you don't marry me, I—I—I'm done for.

LILY.

H'sh! Nonsense; not you!

FARNCOMBE.

It's true. Life'll be over for me from that moment, if you refuse to marry me.

LILY.

[*Mockingly.*] Over!

FARNCOMBE.

Oh, love is all on my side at present, naturally; but, as God hears me, it'll be no fault of mine if you don't grow to love me in time.

LILY.

Listen——!

FARNCOMBE.

I'll worship you—worship you. I *do* worship you!

LILY.

H'sh! Lord Farncombe——

FARNCOMBE.

Eddie! Won't you?

LILY.

Certainly not.

FARNCOMBE.

Do! Eddie! Eddie!

LILY.

Eddie, then——

FARNCOMBE.

Ah——!

LILY.

Sit down a minute. [*She goes to the settee and sits there, somewhat ruffled, and he moves to the arm-chair by the centre table and also sits, his elbows on his knees, bending towards her. She pushes her hair back from her brow impatiently, as if vexed with herself.*] Lord Farncombe—Eddie—for how long have you known me?

FARNCOMBE.

What does it matter? I—I admit——

LILY.

Reckoning our acquaintance from last week—from the afternoon Bertie brought you here, when we scarcely spoke to one another—you haven't known me for as many days as you can count on your fingers.

FARNCOMBE.

I've watched you—watched you in the theatre——

LILY.

On the stage! Ho, ho! Oh, you—but I mustn't call you silly boy again, must I! And what do you know *of* me, apart from the glimpse you've had of me off the stage, and my being a shining light at the Pandora? What do you know of my—what's the word?—origin—where and what I've sprung from;

how I was reared ; how much education I've received ; how much I've contrived to pick up of the way to behave in *per-lite* society ? You can judge from poor mother, if from nothing else, that I come from humble beginnings. Yes, but *how* humble you couldn't *dream*, [*making a grimace*] not after a supper of raw carrots !

FARNCOMBE.

Do you think I *care* how humble your beginnings were ! What I do know—what I *am* sure about—is that you're good—and beautiful—and—and—and gifted—and—and—[*leaning his head on his hands*] oh, I can't describe you ; you're—you're—to me, you're *perfect*.

LILY.

[*After a pause, looking at him with blinking eyelids.*] You—you dear ! [*He raises his head. She changes her tone instantly.*] *Merci* ; yes, perfect, *pour le moment*. Hear my French ! [*Taking the box of cigarettes from the table.*] Have a cigarette ? Don't get up. [*She tosses him a cigarette and he catches it.*] My name's printed on them—"Lily." [*Lighting a cigarette.*] Isn't it *chic* !

FARNCOMBE.

[*Producing his cigarette case and exchanging her cigarette for one of his own.*] I'll never smoke *that*.

LILY.

[*Pushing the match-stand towards him.*] *Stupid* ! Now, attend to me. What do you say to a tiny provision shop in Kennington, over the water ?

FARNCOMBE.

Was that——?

LILY.

[*Nodding.*] H'm; that was my start in the world. Father kept a small shop in Kennington—Gladwin Street, near the Oval. We sold groceries, and butter and eggs and cheese, and pickled-pork and paraffin. I was born there—on the second floor; and in Gladwin Street I lived till I was fourteen. Then father smashed, through the Stores cutting into our little trade. Well, hardly smashed; that's too imposing. The business just faded, and one morning we didn't bother to take the shutters down. Then, after a while, father got a starvation berth—eighteen shillings a week!—at a wholesale bacon warehouse—Price and Moseley's—still over the water; and I earned an extra five at a place in the Westminster Bridge Road, for pasting the gilt edges on to passe-partouts from nine a.m. till six in the evening.

FARNCOMBE.

[*His head bowed again.*] Great heavens!

LILY.

Not a syllable against the passe-partouts! They were the making of me. It was the passe-partouts that brought me and Tedder together.

FARNCOMBE.

Who?

LILY.

Tedder. In the house where I worked, a man of

the name of Tedder—Ambrose Tedder—taught dancing—stage dancing—"Tedder's Academy of Saltatory Art"—and every time I passed Tedder's door, and heard his violin or piano, and the sound of the pupils' feet, I—! [*Breaking off and throwing herself back.*] Oh, lor', if once I——!

FARNCOMBE.

Go on; go on.

LILY.

Well, ultimately Tedder took me and trained me—did it for nix—for what he hoped to get out of me in the future. Ah, and he *hasn't* lost over me—poor old Ambrose! He collared a third of my salary for ever so long; and now that the old chap's rheumaticky and worn out, I—oh, it's not worth mentioning. [*Jumping up and walking away.*] My stars, he could teach, could Tedder! I began by going to him for the last twenty minutes of my dinner-hour. He wanted to stop *that*, because it was bad for me, he said, to practise on a full—a full—! Ha, ha, ha! On a full—! [*Behind the table, resting her two hands upon it and shaking with laughter.*] Ho, ho, ho! As if I ever had—in those days——!

FARNCOMBE.

[*Writhing.*] Ah, don't—don't——!

LILY.

[*Brushing the tears from her eyes.*] I was a pupil of Tedder's for twelve months, and then he got me on at the Canterbury; and from the Canterbury I went to Gatti's, and from Gatti's to the Lane, for a few lines

in the pantomime and an understudy—my first appearance in the West End—[*singing*] "Oh, the West End is the best end!"—and from there I went to the old Strand, and there Morrie Cooling spotted me, and that led to me being engaged at the Pandora, where I ate my heart out, doing next to nothing, for two whole years. Then came the production of *The Duchess of Brixton*, and it was in *The Duchess*—thanks to Vincent Bland—that I sang the "Mind the Paint" song. He believed in me, did Vincent; *he* saw I was fit for something more than just prancing about, and airing my ankles, in a gay frock. By Jupiter, how he fought for me; *how* he fought for me, up to the final rehearsal! And to this day, whenever I indulge in a prayer, you bet Vincent Bland has a paragraph all to himself in it! [*Checking herself and coming to FARNCOMBE.*] Oh, but—I needn't inflict quite so much of my biography on you, need I? [*He rises.*] Sorry. I merely wanted to tell you enough to show you—to show you—

FARNCOMBE.

[*Close to her, gazing into her eyes.*] To show me what a—what a *marvel* you are!

LILY.

[*Pleased.*] Ha, ha! Oh, I'm not chucking mud at myself really. Why should I! Many a woman 'ud feel as vain as a peacock in my shoes. Fancy! From the shop in Gladwin Street to—[*with a gesture*] to *this!* And from Tedder's stuffy room in the Westminster Bridge Road to the stage of the Pandora, as principal girl!

FARNCOMBE.

[*Tenderly.*] Wonderful!

LILY.

[*Carried away by her narration and putting her hands upon his shoulders familiarly.*] Yes, and all the schooling I've ever had, Eddie, was at a cheap, frowsy day-school in Kennington, with a tribe of other common, skinny-legged brats. Imagine it!

FARNCOMBE.

[*Taking her hands.*] I can't imagine it; I defy anybody to.

LILY.

[*Unthinkingly allowing him to retain her hands.*] Everything I've learned since—except my music, and that I owe to Tedder and Vincent—everything I've learned since, I've learned by sheer cuteness, from novels, the papers, the theatres, and by keeping my ears open like a cunning little parrot. [*Softly.*] Ha, ha! That's what I am—a cunning little parrot!

FARNCOMBE.

[*Laughing with her.*] Ha, ha!

LILY.

[*Tossing her head.*] Ho, I dare say, if I had the opportunity, I could imitate the fine *lydies* you mix with, so that in less than six months you'd hardly know the difference between them and me!

FARNCOMBE.

[*Holding her hands to his breast.*] There is no difference already; there is none.

LILY.

Isn't there! [*Almost nestling up to him.*] Ah, you should see me in one of my vile tempers. [*Wistfully.*] Then—then you wouldn't—! [*Becoming conscious of her proximity to him, she backs away and stands rubbing the palms of her hands together in embarrassment.*] Anyhow—anyhow it isn't my intention to give you a chance of comparing us.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Under his breath.*] Oh—Miss Parradell——!

LILY.

[*Collecting herself.*] No, I—I'm not going to let you make a fool of yourself over *me*, if I can help it.

FARNCOMBE.

Fool——!

LILY.

[*Facing him and speaking quietly but firmly.*] Recollect, however shrewd and apt I may be, and however straight I've managed to keep myself, still—I'm only a Pandora girl, and should always be remembered as one by your chums and belongings. Only a Pandora girl. Nothing can alter that, dear boy; and you mustn't—you mustn't handicap yourself by hanging *me* round your neck.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Heavily.*] I—I shouldn't be the first of my sort to marry a "Pandora girl," not by half a dozen or more.

LILY.

No, but—without wishing to flatter you—I don't quite put you on a level with Robbie Kinterton, and Glenroy, and Georgie Fawcus, and—that crew. [*Cheerfully.*] And so I mean to take care of you—to take care of you for your own sake and for your mammy's and daddy's. [*She turns from him and fetches his hat and coat and gives them to him. He receives them from her with a dazed look.*] Time's up. [*After a silence during which neither stirs.*] Never mind. You'll survive it. [*Another pause.*] Come along.

[*She passes him, to go to the door on the left. As she does so he flings his hat and coat on to the settee, and clasps her in his arms.*]

FARNCOMBE.

Lily—Lily——!

LILY.

Ah, that's not fair!

FARNCOMBE.

Don't—don't send me away like this!

LILY.

[*Her hand against his breast.*] It isn't fair of you!

FARNCOMBE.

Say you'll take time to consider

LILY.

I hate you for it!

FARNCOMBE.

Ask Roper's advice—your mother's——!

LILY.

I've trusted you!

FARNCOMBE.

Ask Miss Birch——!

LILY.

Eddie! Lord Farncombe——! [*He releases her and they confront one another, she panting, he hanging his head guiltily.*] W-w-well, I—I have been mistaken in you.

FARNCOMBE.

[*In despair.*] I—I—— [*Turning from her and hitting his temples with his fists.*] Forgive me. Forgive me.

LILY.

Ha! I—I thought you were such a quiet, bashful fellow.

FARNCOMBE.

Forgive me. Forgive me.

[*She wavers and then slowly approaches him.*]

LILY.

[*Gently.*] Don't—don't fret about it. I forgive you. [*Touching his arm with her finger-tips.*] I'm to blame. [*Drawing a deepbreath.*] All those dances——!
 [*He seizes her hand and kisses it passionately.*]

FARNCOMBE.

I may see you again? I may see you again? Lily—Lily—! Lily——!

LILY.

[*In a whisper, averting her head.*] N-no—we'd better not—— [*There is a low but distinct knocking at the door on the left. She withdraws her hand and they look at each other, he inquiringly, she with a calm face. The knocking is repeated.*] Mother. [*She goes to the door and speaks with her mouth close to it.*] That you, mother? [*She listens for a reply and again the knocking is heard.*] Who is it? [*She opens the door. JEYES is outside.*] Nicko! [*JEYES comes into the room. He has rid himself of his wig and beard and is wearing an overcoat buttoned up to his chin and a cap drawn down to his brows. His face is white and his jaws are set determinedly.*] How—how have you got in? [*He produces a bunch of keys and grimly displays a latch-key.*] Oh—oh——! [*Pulling off his cap, JEYES advances to the table in the centre, glaring at FARNCOMBE. LILY closes the door sharply and also advances, speaking volubly to FARNCOMBE as she comes forward.*] Captain Jeyes is in the habit of bringing me home from the theatre after my work; and a long while ago I gave him a latch-key to carry on his key-ring, so that he could let me into my house whenever I'd forgotten my own key. He hasn't the slightest right to use it at any other time; nobody knows that better than he does. It's a confounded liberty! [*To JEYES, hotly.*] What are you doing here at all at this hour of the morning?

JEYES.

[*After an expressive glance at FARNCOMBE.*] An odd question, in the circumstances.

LILY.

Answer me!

JEYES.

Keeping an eye on *you*.

LILY.

Spying on me!

JEYES.

On you—[*jerking his head towards FARNCOMBE*] and——

LILY.

How dare you!

JEYES.

I've been at it all night.

LILY.

All night!

JEYES.

Yes; I was in the theatre while you were supping and dancing.

LILY.

You were!

JEYES.

I *meant* to be there. You did your best to stop it——

LILY.

That's a lie!

JEYES.

So that you could enjoy yourself thoroughly—
[*glancing at FARNCOMBE again*] with——

LILY.

A lie!

JEYES.

I didn't leave till past three. You and—[*with another motion of the head towards FARNCOMBE*] had just had your fifth dance together, and they were hauling you round the building.

LILY.

Where *were* you? Who——?

JEYES.

Excuse me; that's my business. Then I went back to Jermyn Street, and it suddenly struck me I'd like to see how your escort was composed.

LILY.

You've been watching outside?

JEYES.

Since a quarter-to-four—under the portico at the corner.

LILY.

[*Contemptuously.*] You——!

JEYES.

Yes, but, by God, I wasn't quite prepared for *this!*

LILY.

This!

JEYES.

[*Cramming his cap into his overcoat-pocket and coming to FARNCOMBE.*] What the hell's your game? You've got some accommodating friends, both of you, in that blackguard Roper and that slut Jimmie Birch!

LILY.

Oh—! [*Approaching JEYES with clenched fists.*] Ah, you cur——!

FARNCOMBE.

[*Holding up his hand to her appealingly.*] Miss Parradell——!

LILY.

[*To JEYES.*] You cur! Mother's been told that Lord Farncombe's with me. I sent Jimmie up to tell her.

JEYES.

Where *is* your mother?

LILY.

In bed, of course.

JEYES.

Snoring! Ha, ha, ha! Faugh, there's an ugly name, my girl, for such mothers as yours!

LILY.

Ah—! [*Raising her fist.*] Ah-h-h-h——!

FARNCOMBE.

Miss Parradell——!

LILY.

[*Restraining herself with difficulty and pacing the room.*] Oh, the cur! The cur! The cur!

FARNCOMBE.

[*To JEYES, looking at him steadily.*] Captain
Jeyes——

LILY.

The low cur!

FARNCOMBE.

Captain Jeyes, do you happen to know where
I lodge?

JEYES.

No; I don't know where your sty is.

FARNCOMBE.

St. James's Place—forty-seven. I shall be in at
twelve o'clock. [*Picking up his hat and overcoat.*]
From the tone this gentleman adopts, Miss Parradell,
I assume that he considers himself entitled to concern
himself in your affairs. [*Moving over to the left where*
LILY *joins him.*] Perhaps it will make it easier for
you if I——

LILY.

[*Clutching his arm.*] Ah, I'm so indignant, Eddie!
I—I—I——!

JEYES.

Eddie! *Eddie!*

LILY.

[*Turning upon JEYES in a fury.*] Yes, you cad—
Eddie, *Eddie*, EDDIE! You cad! You sneak! You
idler! You waster! I've stood it long enough.
This is the last straw! I've done with you! I'm sick
to death of you! How I've tolerated you all these
years is a mystery to me! After this, get out of my
sight and never show yourself to me again!

JEYES.

[*Grasping her wrist, fiercely.*] Lily——!

LILY.

[*Wrenching herself free.*] What! [*Losing control
over herself utterly.*] You'll spy on me, will you, you
shabby loafer! You'll peep at me while I'm eating
my supper, and count the dances I choose to give
that boy over there, will you! And then you'll break
into my house, and insult my friends behind their
backs, and insinuate foul things against my poor old
mother—you damned coward!—and against me,
[*pointing to FARNCOMBE*] and *him!* Why, you're not
fit to black his boots, and you never were—never—
you—you—you scum! Here! [*Taking FARNCOMBE's
note from her bosom and thrusting it at JEYES.*] Read
that! [*Sitting in the arm-chair by the centre table.*]

Read it! Read it! Read it! [JEYES reads to himself.] Out loud!

JEYES.

[Mumbling.] "Dear Miss Parradell. Will you allow me——?"

LILY.

Louder!

JEYES.

"Will you allow me to remain behind for a few minutes with Miss Jimmie after the others have gone? I know I am presuming a lot, but I cannot leave you till I have asked you the most important question a man can put to a woman. Farncombe."

LILY.

[Breathless.] Written here—on my note-paper—while I was out of the room! It came on me like a thunder-clap! Ah! Ah! Ah! [JEYES sits upon the settee, staring at the carpet.] And Morrie Cooling and Lal will tell you that I hadn't a notion that Lord Farncombe was to be at the supper last night, or any of the boys; not a notion. I blackguarded 'em both for deceiving me, and causing me to deceive you. [Taking the scent-atomizer from the table and spraying her face with it.] Now! What have you to say now! Ah! Ah! Ah!

JEYES.

[Huskily.] Why—why the devil did you let Jimmie go? Why did you let her go? It was knowing that you and Farncombe were alone that—that made me——

LILY.

Oh, if I'd suspected that a private detective was hovering around, I'd have kept the whole lot of my friends! As it was, Jimmie was looking dead, and—! [*in disdain.*] Pah!

[*There is a pause and then JEYES sits upright and draws his hand wearily across his eyes.*]

JEYES.

[*To LILY.*] Well, I—I beg your pardon. [*LILY continues to spray herself energetically.*] I'm not so completely *scum* as not to see that I ought to beg your pardon. [*Humbly.*] I beg your pardon.

LILY.

[*Softening by degrees.*] You—you drive me mad sometimes—positively frantic!

JEYES.

[*Partly to himself.*] Mad! [*To FARNCOMBE.*] And you, Farncombe—I hope you'll accept my apologies. I offer them unreservedly.

[*FARNCOMBE bows, somewhat stiffly.*]

LILY.

[*To JEYES, protruding her lower lip.*] I—I didn't mean half I said, Nicko; I didn't mean half of it. [*Eyeing FARNCOMBE askance as she replaces the atomizer.*] And I—I'm ashamed of myself for losing my self-control as I did. [*There is another pause and then JEYES gets to his feet and silently returns the note to LILY. She looks up at him piteously and puts the note back into her*]

bosom. Then he takes out his key-ring, removes the latch key from it, and throws the key on to the table. Having done this, he drags his cap from his pocket and makes for the door on the left. As he passes LILY, she rises and gently plucks at his sleeve.] Nicko—Nicko—

J EYES.

[*In a thick voice.*] Eh?

LILY.

Won't you—won't you give Lord Farncombe—some explanation——?

J EYES.

Explanation——?

LILY.

Of the sort of terms we've been on, you and I, He—he must be—rather puzzled— [*turning away to the table.*] Oh, it's due to you as well as to me!

J EYES.

[*Dully.*] Just as you please. [*With a hard laugh.*] Ho, ho! Yes, perhaps it is due to me that he should learn a little more about me than he's been able to gather from personal observation—and from your eloquent but summary description. [*Under his breath, screwing up his cap.*] Idler—waster—loafer——!

LILY.

[*Penitently.*] Nicko!

J EYES.

[*To FARNCOMBE, quietly.*] Oh, it's a true bill, Farncombe. And yet, a very few years back—*she* won't

dispute it—I was one of the smartest chaps going, good at my job, with prospects as rosy as any man's in my regiment. There wasn't a cloud the size of your hand, apparently, in my particular bit of sky at the time I speak of; not a speck! Then I met this young lady, and—[*pointing to the box-ottoman*] well, since we're in for it——!

FARNCOMBE.

Oh, Captain Jeyes——

JEYES.

No, no; she wishes you to understand the exact nature of the friendship between her and me. I'm obeying instructions. [FARNCOMBE *sits on the ottoman, nursing his hat and overcoat. Then JEYES sits in the arm-chair by the centre table, first turning the chair so that it faces FARNCOMBE.*] Farncombe, I was under thirty, and still a subaltern, when I made Miss Parradell's acquaintance. Like most of my pals, I was spending my nights, whenever I could get away from Aldershot, in the stalls at the Pandora—much the same as *you've* been doing recently, and as a certain class of young man'll go on doing as long as the Pandora, and similar shops, continue to flourish. Ha! How honoured we felt, we men, in those days, at knowing some of the Pandora girls, and having the privilege of supping 'em and standing 'em dinner on Sunday evenings! If they'd been royal princesses we couldn't have been more elated. [*With a gesture.*] Don't jump at conclusions. It generally ended there, or with our running into debt at a jeweller's. *We* were young, *they* were beautiful—or we thought 'em

so; but the majority of us weren't vicious, any more than the majority of the girls were—though many of 'em were mighty calculating. It would have been better for us men if all the girls *had* been wicked; the glamour, the infatuation, the folly, would have been sooner over, and one of us at least would have had a different tale to tell.

[JEYES *pauses, gazing at the floor, FARNCOMBE moves impatiently on the ottoman and LILY seats herself upon the settee.*

LILY.

[*Plaintively.*] Nicko—Nicko—I merely wanted you to——

JEYES.

[*Rousing himself and speaking to LILY over his shoulder.*] Who was it introduced us?

LILY.

Miss Du Cane—Aggie Du Cane.

JEYES.

Agnes Du Cane. *She's gone under.* [*To LILY.*] Outside Buckley's oyster-bar, wasn't it?

LILY.

Not outside; in the parlour.

JEYES.

[*To FARNCOMBE.*] Lily had only lately come to the Pandora—a pale-faced slip of a thing. [*To LILY.*] Eighteen, weren't you?

LILY.

[*Nodding.*] Eighteen.

JEYES.

I confess I wasn't overwhelmingly attracted by her at first; she was so unlike the rest. [*Laughing bitterly.*] Ha, ha, ha!

LILY.

[*Weakly.*] Ha, ha, ha! Wasn't I dowdy!

JEYES.

But she was humble, and naïve, and confiding; and my vanity was tickled by her delight at the little treats I gave her, and by her gratitude for a tuppenny-ha'penny present or two. Nobody, I believe, with any pretensions to being a gentleman, had paid her much attention before I arrived on the scene.

LILY.

[*In a murmur.*] No; nobody.

JEYES.

I didn't find out that I was in love with her—you guess it's a love story, don't you?—

FARNCOMBE.

[*Delicately.*] My dear Captain Jeyes—

JEYES.

I didn't find out that I was neck and heels in love with her until nearly a year afterwards, when my regiment went to the Curragh. *That* did it—separation! What I suffered in that hole, thinking of her, starving for her! In less than three months I was in London again, on leave, and in my old stall at the

Pandora. But even then, Farncombe, I hadn't your pluck.

FARNCOMBE.

Pluck?

JEYES.

The pluck to snap my fingers at the world and propose marriage to a Pandora girl. Besides, my mother was alive then, and—[*abruptly, with a wild look*] would you like to know what *she* used to call these Pandora women, Farncombe? [*Bending forward, his hands tightly clenched.*] She used to call them *a menace to society*. With their beauty, and their flagrant opportunities for displaying it, they are a living curse, she used to say—a source of constant dread to mothers whose hope it is to see their sons safely mated to modest, maidenly girls of the typical English pattern. She told us once—my brothers and me—frightened as to where *we* were drifting, that she was one of many mothers who prayed on their knees daily that their boys might be spared from being drawn into the net woven by their own weaknesses and passions—drawn into it by these—these——! [*He breaks off, stares about him for a moment, and then rises.*] Oh, but I oughtn't to have repeated this to *you*. Pardon. [*Walking away unsteadily.*] Ho, damned bad taste! [*Behind the table, supporting himself by leaning upon it.*] Where was I? Back from the Curragh! [*Confused.*] Yes—yes—and so things went on for a couple o' years—I trailing after Lily closer than ever—and at last—at last I *did* ask her to be my wife.

LILY.

[*Who has been listening to JEYES with parted lips*

and wide-open eyes—appealingly.] Don't! Don't, Nicko; don't!

JEYES.

[*Oblivious of her interruption.*] But I'd left it too late. The novelty of me had worn off; she'd scores of friends by that time; she'd made her big hit, and followed it with another, and was the talk o' the town. And she'd money; she wasn't dependent on me any longer for her gloves and her trips and outings!

LILY.

[*Her head drooping.*] Oh! Oh! [*Wringing her hands.*] Oh, that's beastly of you; beastly!

JEYES.

She was kind to me too, in a way—kind and cruel. She didn't want to marry me; she didn't want to marry anybody; she was in love with herself, and her success, and what it was bringing her. But she wouldn't give me the kick. No, she wouldn't do that; I *had* been something to her. And there's where the kindness came in—and the merciless cruelty. [*Sitting upon the fauteuil-stool rigidly.*] God, if only she'd broken with me then, firmly and finally—if only she'd broken with me then—she—she might have saved me!

LILY.

[*Struggling with her tears.*] Oh, Nicko, Nicko!

JEYES.

Twelve months ago she did throw me a bone. The regiment was under orders for India, and of

course I sent in my papers; and out of pity, I suppose—and because I was always pestering her—she promised to become engaged to me if I'd get other work to do. Work! I wonder whether really she was grinning to herself when she made the stipulation!

LILY.

Oh—oh——!

JEYES.

Work! All the spunk, all the energy, had been sapped out of me long before, and even her promise couldn't revive it. My search for a berth wasn't much more than a sham. At the back of my head I knew very well what I'd come to. The only work I was capable of was dancing attendance on *her*, and filling in what remained of the day and night at a rotten restaurant, a Bohemian club, and the bar of the theatre. And that's *been* my sole employment for the past year—nothing but that. Pretty, for a man who started life as swimmingly as I did! [*His voice dying away.*] Pretty — pretty — pretty — pretty ——!

LILY.

[*After a profound stillness.*] I—I don't think you've ever—put the case to me—quite so plainly as this, Nicko.

JEYES.

I—I don't think I've ever put it quite so plainly—to myself.

LILY.

[*Her lip trembling.*] You—you won't believe me——

JEYES.

What ?

LILY.

I—I've never fully realised it till now—the harm I've done you. I declare to God I've never realised it till now. [*Faintly.*] Nicko——!

JEYES.

[*After a further pause.*] Ah, well—! [*With a deep sigh.*] Ah, well! [*To FARNCOMBE, resignedly.*] Farncombe, I—I'm afraid I'm a shocking brute. I—I got carried away. Forget—forget the things I've said of this girl. Forget 'em, will yer? [*Starting to his feet.*] And look here! A man who isn't a sportsman deserves to be shot. You've won her; I've lost her. Congratulate yer, old chap; congratulate yer! [*Pulling on his cap.*] Take care of her, that's all; m-m-mind you take care of her!

[*He turns towards the door and she jumps up and runs to him and seizes his arm.*

FARNCOMBE also rises.

LILY.

No, no, Nicko! Nicko—! [*Giving FARNCOMBE a half frightened, half imploring look.*] Nicko, I can't undo the mischief I've done; I can't do that. But I can try to make it up to you—some of it—and I will, if you'll let me. [*Putting her arms round his shoulders.*] Nicko——!

JEYES.

[*Roughly.*] Make it—up to me?

LILY.

[*Her face close to his.*] You know what I mean! As soon as possible—next month, if you like—next week—quietly—! [*He grips her arms and stares at her blankly.*] Ha, ha! Yes, you've been in too great a hurry to settle matters, *you* have. Lord Farncombe and I—we—*we're* not going to be married. I've refused him. [*Wildly.*] I—I've ruined *you*, Nicko; but I—I've told him—I'm not going to draw *him* into my net! [*Clinging to JEYES and burying her face in the breast of his coat, crying.*] Oh! Oh! Oh! I'm not going to draw *him* into my net!

[*Again there is a pause and then JEYES turns to FARNCOMBE, dazed.*]

JEYES.

Farncombe——?

FARNCOMBE.

[*Inclining his head.*] Yes—yes——

JEYES.

[*With feeling.*] My dear fellow, I—I——!

LILY.

[*Raising her head and speaking through her tears—to JEYES.*] Nicko, I—I want to have one more word with Lord Farncombe—just one more word. [*He nods understandingly and goes to the door on the left. She follows him.*] Only a minute; [*he opens the door*] and

then you must walk away together, you and he, and part good friends. [*He goes out on to the landing and she closes the door and stands with her back to it, drying her eyes with her handkerchief.* FARNCOMBE, still carrying his hat and overcoat, has crossed to the settee, a forlorn figure.] W-w-well, you—you have had a lucky escape, haven't you?

FARNCOMBE.

[*Hearily.*] Escape?

LILY.

[*Leaving the door and advancing.*] You—you've heard what a cold-blooded, selfish wretch I am—how I've treated Nicko!

FARNCOMBE.

[*Waving the idea away.*] Oh——!

LILY.

[*Coming to him.*] And you've seen what I'm like when I'm in a rage; you've seen what the genuine Lily Margaret Upjohn is, without her disguise. [*Looking up into his face pathetically.*] Yes, that was *me*, Eddie, under the crust. Common as dirt, dear; common as dirt! [*Holding the lapels of his coat.*] Oh! Oh, you'll always remember me, with my eyes starting out of my head, spitting at Nicko! You'll always picture that horrible sight when you think of me.

FARNCOMBE.

You—you were provoked; I—I admired you for it.

LILY.

[*Tenderly.*] Ah, you dear boy! [*In an altered tone.*] Eddie——

FARNCOMBE.

Yes?

LILY.

Had you—a little hope—that, after all, I might turn your offer over in my mind and—and eventually——?

FARNCOMBE.

Yes—yes.

LILY.

[*With a catch in her breath.*] Ah——! [*In a whisper.*] I—I'll tell you something.

FARNCOMBE.

What?

LILY.

[*In his ear.*] I *might* have, if—if you'd persisted.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Groaning.*] Oh-h-h-h!

LILY.

[*Retreating a step or two.*] Thank God Nicko came along! Thank God Nicko came along! *What* was it his mother called us girls? A menace to society; creatures to be dreaded, and prayed against! You see I was right in wishing to protect you for your mammy's sake as well as your own. But, oh—thank God Nicko came along! [*He sits suddenly upon the*

settee and covers his face with his hands. She returns to him quickly. Ah, don't do that; don't do that! [*Touching his hands.*] Eddie! Eddie! I'm not worth it. Eddie! [*With an effort, he lifts his head.*] Listen. This is what I want to say to you. Don't come near me any more; you mustn't. And don't come to the theatre again either. If I thought you were sitting in front, I—I'm sure I couldn't——! [*Entreatingly.*] Swear—swear you'll keep away from me, and from the theatre! [*He nods.*] And you'll never go to any supper or dinner or dance where you're likely to meet the other girls, will you? Eddie! [*He shakes his head.*] Swear! [*He rises and, as he does so, she grips the lapels of his coat again, her eyes blazing fiercely.*] Oh! Oh! If one of the other girls ever got hold of you, I—I— [*hissing into his face*] I'd kill her! [*She leaves him and goes to the door on the left and opens it.*] Nicko! [*JEYES enters the room.*] March, both of you! [*Exhausted.*] I—I'm pretty well baked. [*FARNCOMBE joins LILY and JEYES at the door and she stands between the two men looking from one to the other and taking a hand of each.*] Ha, ha, ha! I've made the pair of you precious miserable, if you only knew it. [*To JEYES.*] The difference is that he'll soon forget me, and you, with me for a wife, are doomed for life. [*Putting her hands upon JEYES' shoulders.*] Nicko——! [*She kisses him lightly and, having done so, asks him a question with her eyes. JEYES turns aside and she faces FARNCOMBE and offers him her lips. They kiss.*] Good-bye. [*After a moment's pause, to both of them.*] Away with you! [*The two men go out and she follows them to the top of the stairs and watches them descend. Then she slowly comes back into the room and stands listening at the door. There is a distant sound.*] Ah! [*Partly closing*

the door, she wanders about the room aimlessly for a while. Then, impulsively, she runs to the further window, lifts the sash, and looks below.] Ah! . . . Ah! . . . [Drawing back.] Ah-h-h-h——!

[She shuts the window and comes to the settee and, sitting there, takes off her shoes. Then she goes down upon the floor inelegantly, hunts for her slippers, and puts them on. As she rises, the door on the left is pushed open and MRS. UPJOHN peeps in cautiously.]

MRS. UPJOHN.

[In a dressing-gown and with her hair, now very scanty, tightly screwed up.] Lil——?

LILY.

[Stiffening herself and speaking in a cold, level voice.] Oh, I was just coming up to you, mother, to get you to undo me.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[Bustling to LILY.] I didn't mean to, but I fell off. *[Unhooking LILY'S dress.]* It *was* the front-door I 'eard a minute ago, then? It gave me sech a start. *[In difficulties with the hooks.]* Turn more to the light, dearie. These dressmakers do it a' purpose, I b'lieve. The 'ooks on that noo gown o' mine are a perfect myst'ry. Wot's *this*?

LILY.

[Twisting her body.] Oh, don't fiddle so, mother!

MRS. UPJOHN.

You *did* let 'im stay a time, Lil. 'Eaps to talk over, eh?

LILY.

[*Stonily.*] Heaps. [*Trying to assist Mrs. UPJOHN.*]
Oh——!

MRS. UPJOHN.

Well, dear ; well, well ! Tell me wot's took place.
Don't keep me in suspense.

LILY.

I shan't tell you anything, mother, till I've had a
sleep. I must go through the sheets first. [*Stamping
her foot.*] Oh, tear the thing ; tear it !

MRS. UPJOHN.

'Ave you consented to make 'im 'appy, poor young
gentleman ? That's all I want to know, Lil. [*Over-
coming a hook.*] There !

LILY.

Thank you, mother. [*Slipping her arms out of her
dress.*] I can manage the rest.

MRS. UPJOHN.

But, Lil, dearie——!

LILY.

Oh, for mercy's sake, leave me alone ! [*Violently.*]
Why can't you leave me alone !

MRS. UPJOHN.

Ho ! Very good ! [*Moving away indignantly as
LILY, with shaking fingers, unfastens a necklace.*] This
is my reward for layin' awake 'alf the night, is it, an'
for thinkin' of you, an' wonderin' about you ! Un-

grateful little puss, you! [*Going towards the door.*] After this, you can keep your affairs to yourself for as long as ever you choose. Don't you expect *me*——!

LILY.

[*Suddenly, sitting upon the settee.*] Mother——!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Sharply.*] Yes?

LILY.

[*Her hand to her brow.*] Oh, mother——!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Hurrying to LILY.*] Wot is it?

LILY.

[*Swaying.*] At last—at last——!

MRS. UPJOHN.

At last——?

LILY.

[*Clinging to Mrs. UPJOHN.*] I'm in love, mother—I'm in love—in love—in love——!

END OF THE THIRD ACT.



THE FOURTH ACT

The scene is the same as in the preceding act, but the light outside is brighter and warmer and in the room is more diffused. On the table in the centre, placed close to the settee, there is a small tray with a breakfast of tea and toast upon it. The bedroom door is partly open.

[LILY, wan and red-eyed, is lying, propped up by cushions, upon the settee. A newspaper is on her lap but she is gazing at vacancy. She is in *négligé*. A Jainty morning-robe covers her night-gown, her bare feet are in slippers, and her hair is in a simple knot. MAUD is at one of the drawers of the cupboard at the back, engaged in selecting some articles of lingerie, and MRS. UPJOHN, completely dressed for the day, is sitting in the arm-chair by the centre table, her face hidden by a newspaper which she is reading. Presently MAUD shuts the drawer and, carrying the lingerie, comes forward.]

MAUD.

[To LILY.] What frock'll you put on ?

LILY.

[*Starting slightly.*] Eh?

MAUD.

One of your embroidered muslins, or your Ninon?

LILY.

[*Languidly.*] Either; *I* don't care.

MAUD.

Oh, gracious, what on earth *is* the matter with you this morning! I've never known you as queer as this after any hop you've been to in *my* time. [*To Mrs. UPJOHN, who has lowered her paper.*] Nothing wrong, is there?

LILY.

[*Turning over and burying her head in the cushions.*] Maud.

MAUD.

[*Moving to the settee and bending over LILY.*] Here I am, lovey.

LILY.

[*In a muffled voice.*] Go into the next room and shut the door, and don't let me see your stupid, fat face till I come to you.

MAUD.

[*Laughing heartily.*] Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho! That's better. [*Going to the bedroom door.*] That's how I like to hear her talk. We needn't send for Dr. Gilson yet awhile. Ha, ha, ha!

[*She disappears into the bedroom and closes the door.*]

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Looking at LILY.*] Lil.

LILY.

Yes, mother?

MRS. UPJOHN.

'Ave another cup o' tea, won't you?

LILY.

No.

MRS. UPJOHN.

'Nother bit o' toast, then?

LILY.

No.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Smoke a cigarette.

LILY.

No.

MRS. UPJOHN.

You always *do* 'ave a w'ilf' after your breakfast.
Come!

LILY.

No.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Rising and walking away.*] Oh, dear; oh, dear!
Deuce take Carlton Smythe an' 'is supper party—
those are *my* sentiments; an' Lal Roper, busybody

that 'e is! Things were goin' on with us as smooth an' peaceful as could be, before this upset.

LILY.

[*Raising herself, angrily.*] You were in it, mother; you're as much to blame as anybody.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Haltin'g.*] 'Ow in it?

LILY.

In Uncle Lal's artful plan to prevent Nicko from being invited. You've confessed you were.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Lal twisted me round 'is little finger. I was clay in the porter's 'and, as your dad was fond of sayin'.

LILY.

[*Changing her position.*] If only Nicko had been there, I shouldn't have given young Farncombe all those dances, nor wandered about with him in the intervals, nor allowed him to see me home. It all simply wouldn't, *couldn't* have happened. [*Hitting a cushion.*] Oh! [*Sitting up and embracing her knees.*] Mother——!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Behind the settee.*] Wot?

LILY.

[*Knitting her brows.*] I—I'm so surprised at myself.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Surprised?

LILY.

So—so disappointed with myself.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Why, you 'aven't done anything that—that's not quite respectable, Lil. On the cont'ry—

LILY.

No, I haven't done anything that's actually not nice, but—fancy!—

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Close to LILY.*] Fancy—?

LILY.

[*Opening her eyes widely.*] Fancy my letting myself go with young Farncombe as I did! *He—he'd* been admiring me from a distance for weeks and weeks, but I'd scarcely noticed him till last night! [*Leaning her head against MRS. UPJOHN, softly.*] I—I always thought I was such a cold girl, mother, in—in that way.

MRS. UPJOHN.

I s'pose it was wot's called love at first sight, Lil.

LILY.

[*Laughing shamefacedly.*] Ha, ha, ha! [*Putting her feet to the ground and shielding her face with her hands.*] Oh, don't talk rot, mother.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Moving away.*] Any'ow, it's not too late, Lil—even now——

LILY.

Not too late——?

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Behind the centre table.*] To back out, dearie. The Captain couldn't possibly 'old you to a 'asty promise given 'im between four an' five in the mornin'.

LILY.

Oh! Oh, how *can* you! I've passed my word to Nicko and I wouldn't break it for twenty thousand pounds. [*Looking up.*] Mother——!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Fussing with the things upon the table.*] Yes?

LILY.

[*Resolutely.*] I'm going to pull Nicko *up*, mother. I've dragged him down, and I mean to raise him. [*Clenching her hands.*] So help me God, I do!

MRS. UPJOHN.

Well, you've got a tough job before you, Lil, in my opinion.

LILY.

Perhaps; but I mean to succeed. [*After a pause.*] Besides——

MRS. UPJOHN.

Besides——?

LILY.

[*Slowly.*] I've told you—Nicko or no Nicko—I'm determined—I'm determined not to draw Eddie Farncombe into my net.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Into your net? [*Another pause.*] Lil——

LILY.

Eh?

MRS. UPJOHN.

That's twice you've made use o' that remark. 'Oo's accused you——? [*There is a lively rat-tat at the door on the left.*] Come in!

[*The door opens and JIMMIE BIRCH bounces into the room.*]

JIMMIE.

[*As she closes the door.*] Ah, Ma! Ah, Lillums!

MRS. UPJOHN.

Good mornin'.

JIMMIE.

[*Kissing Mrs. UPJOHN.*] Ha, ha! We've met before, this morning, haven't we! [*Coming to LILY.*] Well, dear old girl, and how are *you* to-day? [*Kissing LILY and then eyeing her keenly.*] A wreck?

LILY.

Rather.

JIMMIE.

I *ought* to be, but I'm not. Directly I laid my pretty head on my pillow I went off, and never stirred till I found the breakfast-tray on my chest. [*Reckoning on her fingers.*] Five to six—six to seven—seven to eight—eight to nine—nine to ten—ten to eleven. I've had six hours; that's not so dusty. [*To LILY, slyly.*] You didn't sleep very soundly, probably?

LILY.

Not very.

JIMMIE.

[*Smiling from ear to ear.*] Excited? [*LILY shrugs her shoulders. There is a silence and then JIMMIE, still beaming, looks round and sees that MRS. UPJOHN has seated herself upon the fauteuil-stool.*] May I sit down for a minute?

LILY.

Of course, Jimmie; do.

[*JIMMIE sits in the arm-chair by the centre table, awaiting some communication which doesn't come. MRS. UPJOHN drums upon the table with her fingers and LILY busies herself with re-arranging the cushions on the settee.*

JIMMIE.

[*After a while.*] Hope I haven't dropped in too early?

LILY.

[*Settling her shoulders into the cushions.*] Not a bit, dear,

JIMMIE.

It's nearly half-past twelve. I—I dashed round.
[*After another pause, unable to restrain herself further.*]
Any news? Any-any-anything to tell me?

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Abruptly.*] Yes.

JIMMIE.

W-w-what——?

MRS. UPJOHN.

Lil's engaged.

JIMMIE.

Hah! [*Triumphantly.*] Hah, hah! [*Clapping her hands and beating her feet upon the floor.*] Hah, hah, hah, hah! [*Jumping up and sitting beside LILY and hugging and kissing her.*] Oh! Oh! Oh! Y'm! Y'm! Y'm! Oh, you humbugs! [*Rising and rushing at MRS. UPJOHN and embracing her.*] You solemn humbug, Ma! [*Leaving MRS. UPJOHN and singing and dancing to the refrain sung in the previous Act.*] "If you would only, only love me;—" Ha, ha, ha! "If you would merely, merely say,—" [*Her voice gradually dying away as she sees that the expression on LILY's face, and upon MRS. UPJOHN'S, doesn't alter.*] "Wait but a little—[*standing still*] little—for me——"

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Caustically.*] Yes, you 'ud better wait a little; you'd better wait till you 'ear 'oo she's engaged to.

JIMMIE.

Who—to!

LILY.

[*Studying her nails.*] Whom to, mother.

JIMMIE.

Why, isn't it——?

MRS. UPJOHN.

No, it ain't. It's the Captain.

JIMMIE.

T-t-the Cap—! [*To LILY.*] N-n-nicko? [*LILY nods.* JIMMIE *draws a deep breath.*] Oh-h-h-h!

LILY.

[*Calmly.*] Nicko turned up here early this morning—while Eddie—while Lord Farncombe was with me, in fact—and I—we—the three of us—we talked matters over, and—and——

JIMMIE.

[*Her eyes starting out of her head.*] Was there a row?

LILY.

Oh, don't be so curious, Jimmie. Poor Nicko has been after me for six years. A girl must play the game, if she's at all decent and wishes to preserve a shred of self-respect.

[*Again there is a pause and then JIMMIE silently resumes her seat in the arm-chair.*]

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Moistening her lips with her tongue—to JIMMIE.*]
'Ow do you feel about it?

JIMMIE.

[*Thoughtfully.*] How do I feel about it? [*To LILY.*]
May I say?

LILY.

[*Coldly.*] Certainly.

JIMMIE.

[*Rubbing the arm of her chair with the palm of her hand.*] Well, if I were on board a ship at this moment, I should be ringing for the stewardess; that's how I feel about it.

LILY.

[*Throwing herself, face downward, at full length upon the settee.*] Oh! Oh, you're just like the rest of our girls on the question of marriage! You—you—you're detestable!

JIMMIE.

[*Sliding out of her chair and kneeling at the settee and putting an arm round LILY.*] Oh, Lil—Lil——!

LILY.

[*Repulsing her.*] Yes, you are! [*Raising herself upon her elbow.*] You'd rejoice to see me draw this boy into my net, wouldn't you! You know you would. [*MRS. UPJOHN rises and comes forward.*] I dare say you jolly well wouldn't object to catching him yourself if you'd half a chance! [*Fiercely.*] You try it; you try it—you, or any of you!

JIMMIE.

[*Attempting to rise, scandalised.*] Oh——!

LILY.

[*Holding her.*] No, no——! Jimmie——!

MRS. UPJOHN.

Lil, I'm perfec'ly ashamed of you, speakin' to Jimmie Birch in that manner.

LILY.

[*Dropping her head on JIMMIE's shoulder.*] Oh——!

JIMMIE.

She doesn't mean it.

MRS. UPJOHN.

I 'ope not. It ain't exac'ly pleasant to 'ave a dog in the manger for a daughter. [*To LILY.*] Why *shouldn't* young Farncombe turn 'is attention to Miss Birch, pray, or to any young lady who doesn't object to take your leavin's!

JIMMIE.

[*To Mrs. UPJOHN.*] H'sh, h'sh, h'sh!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Walking about.*] No, I won't 'ush!

JIMMIE.

[*To LILY, quietly.*] I'll come back in the afternoon,

MRS. UPJOHN.

Lil seems to 'ave got some maggot or other in 'er brain about drawin' Lord Farncombe into 'er net. Net indeed! [JIMMIE, *not heeding* Mrs. UPJOHN, *arranges LILY comfortably upon the settee and then rises and smooths out her skirt preparatory to departure.*] As Lal Roper was sayin' yesterday, our tiptop, aristocratic English fam'lies ought to be 'xtremely grateful that strong, 'ealthy perfeshunals o' the class of Miss 'Arker an' Miss Trevail an' Miss Shafto are enterin' their ranks. An' if Lil chooses to be pig-'eaded enough——! [JIMMIE *makes a movement towards* Mrs. UPJOHN.] 'Ave a bottle o' ginger beer before you go. [*There is a prolonged, playful knocking at the door on the left followed, on the part of those in the room, by a gloomy pause.*] That is Lal.

LILY.

[*Groaning.*] Oh-h-h-h!

JIMMIE.

[*Drawing a long face.*] H'm!

LILY.

[*To* JIMMIE.] Oh, Jimmie—stay——!

[*The knocking is repeated. JIMMIE retreats to the right as Mrs. UPJOHN goes to the door and opens it. ROPER is outside.*]

ROPER.

[*Entering, in high spirits.*] Hul-lo, hul-lo, hul-lo, hul-lo! [*Embracing* Mrs. UPJOHN.] Morning, Ma!

[*Advancing.*] Any more bids for the handsome gilt candelabra with the crystal drops? Ha, ha, ha! [To JIMMIE.] Morning, Jimmie! [*Looking down upon LILY, eagerly.*] Well, Lil! Well, my pet!

LILY.

[*In a weary tone, giving him the tips of her fingers and then turning upon her side with her face to the back of the settee.*] How are you, Uncle Lal?

ROPER.

[*Chilled.*] Oh, I—thank you, Lil—[*After a short pause, to MRS. UPJOHN—glancing at LILY.*] Not up to much to-day?

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Glumly.*] No great shakes.

ROPER.

Dancing too hard, I 'spect.

MRS. UPJOHN.

A deal too 'ard.

ROPER.

[*After another pause.*] Anything else amiss, Ma?

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Sitting upon the box-ottoman—to JIMMIE, who is at the piano examining some of the music.*] You tell Lal, Jimmie.

ROPER.

T-t-tell—? [*To JIMMIE, who comes to the settee—apprehensively.*] Jimmie——!

JIMMIE.

[*Behind the settee, gravely.*] No, the old Pandora isn't going to score *this* time, Lal.

ROPER.

Isn't going to—? I d-d-don't follow you.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Be plain, Jimmie.

JIMMIE.

[*Endeavouring to relieve the situation.*] Ha, ha! Nature's taken precious good care of that, in my case.

ROPER.

[*Angrily.*] Now, look here, Jimmie! A jest is a capital thing in its way. No man has a keener sense of humour than Lal Roper. But there *are* occasions when it's out o' place, and this is one of 'em, my dear; and if it's not putting you to serious inconvenience——

JIMMIE.

[*Also losing her temper.*] Oh, well, then, have it in the neck! Lil's declined young Farncombe. There! And when *you* crack a joke next, Mr. Roper, I beg you'll contrive to favour us with a little variety; [*flouncing away*] because you bore me pallid with your rotten wheezes, and always have done.

ROPER.

[*Going to Mrs. UPJOHN, aghast at the tidings.*] Ma——!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*To ROPER, under her breath.*] Won't draw 'im into 'er net, Uncle.

ROPER.

Won't draw him into her——?

JIMMIE.

[*At the back.*] K-n-e-double t—net!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Pacifically.*] Jimmie——!

JIMMIE.

[*Mimicking ROPER derisively.*] Hul-lo, hul-lo, hul-lo, hul-lo! Fresh fish from the sea! Buy 'em on the beach; buy 'em on the beach; buy 'em on the beach!

ROPER.

[*To JIMMIE, indignantly.*] Jimmie Birch——!

JIMMIE.

[*Sitting upon the fauteuil-stool.*] Ha, ha!

ROPER.

[*To MRS. UPJOHN, wiping his brow.*] Of course, there is *this* to be said, Ma. [*Rallying at the idea.*] It may be wise of dear Lil to decline Farncombe *at first*. It—it—it—it doesn't do for a girl, does it, to appear to throw herself at *any* man, let alone a young fellow of the position—the—the—the social status——!

LILY.

[*Suddenly sitting up and putting her feet to the floor again.*] Oh, for mercy's sake, cease discussing my affairs in my presence! [*To MRS. UPJOHN.*] Mother, why do you keep Uncle Lal in the dark? [*To JIMMIE.*] Jimmie, why don't *you*——?

ROPER.

In the dark!

MRS. UPJOHN.

Yes, Lal; your flyin' out at Jimmie over 'er 'armless joke stopped 'er finishin'.

ROPER.

Finishing——?

MRS. UPJOHN.

Lil's not on'y refused young Farncombe but she's gone an' plighted 'erself to another individual.

ROPER.

Plighted herself——?

LILY.

[*Passionately.*] To one of the best! To one of the best!

ROPER.

[*Stupefied.*] Do I—do I know him?

JIMMIE.

Ha!

LILY.

Know him! You know him sufficiently to have plotted and schemed to prevent his being asked to the party last night.

JIMMIE.

[*To LILY.*] Did Lal do that?

LILY.

Did he!

JIMMIE.

Impudence!

ROPER.

[*Sitting in the arm-chair by the centre table—quietly.*]
Jeyes!

JIMMIE.

Nicko.

LILY.

[*Firmly.*] Nicko.

MRS. UPJOHN.

But the Captain *was* at the party last night notwithstanding'.

JIMMIE.

[*To MRS. UPJOHN.*] Nonsense, Ma!

LILY.

Yes, Nicko managed to get into the theatre somehow or other.

JIMMIE.

[*To LILY.*] And watched you and young Farncombe——!

LILY.

And stationed himself under the portico of Twenty seven, to see who brought me home.

JIMMIE.

Oh——!

MRS. UPJOHN.

'E's always been frightfully jealous, the Captain 'as.

JIMMIE.

[*Looking at ROPER.*] Oh, so *really* it's entirely owing to Lal Roper's interference that matters were brought to a head this morning!

LILY.

[*Her eyes flashing.*] Entirely.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Joining in the attack upon ROPER.*] Yes, if Lal 'ad been content to mind 'is own business——

JIMMIE.

And hadn't meddled——!

MRS. UPJOHN.

An' muddled——!

JIMMIE.

Things might have gone on much the same as before.

MRS. UPJOHN.

An' might 'ave ended different.

LILY.

[*Rising and walking away to the right.*] Ah, no, mother——!

JIMMIE.

[*Rising and joining LILY.*] Certainly they might.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Rising.*] Any'ow I 'ope it'll be a lesson to Lal——

JIMMIE.

Do you, Ma!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Moving over to the girls.*] Not to put 'is fingers into other people's pies.

JIMMIE.

[*To MRS. UPJOHN, with a withering glance at ROPER.*] Oh, you *are* sanguine!

ROPER.

[*Rising and straightening himself out.*] Ma—Mrs. Upjohn—Lily——

JIMMIE.

[*Scornfully.*] Hullo, hullo, hullo, hul-lo——!

ROPER.

[*To JIMMIE.*] P'sh! [*Impressively.*] Ma—Lily—for years—longer than it's agreeable to count—I've been a patron of the drama—particularly musical comedy, of which I've studied the development with especial interest.

JIMMIE.

[*Resting her elbows upon the back of the settee.*] Yes, you've studied a lot of development, Lal, in your day.

ROPER.

[*Ignoring JIMMIE.*] It's been a fad with me; I put it no higher than that. [*Producing his gloves.*] But I've devoted time to it——

JIMMIE.

Any amount.

ROPER.

[*Drawing a glove on.*] Often to the neglect of my ventures in the City. Here I am *now*, for instance.

JIMMIE.

That's obvious.

ROPER.

And—I frankly admit it—I've had more than one serious dispute with *Mrs. Roper* on the subject. [*JIMMIE softly whistles a few bars of "Rule, Britannia."*] Yesterday, by a coincidence—[*feeling the outside of his breast-pocket*] letter from the wife—full o' complaints—haven't been to Bexhill, to her and the kids, for weeks. And to do *Ellen Roper* justice, she's not the woman to grumble without cause. [*Picking up his hat and cane which he has placed upon the centre table.*] Dash it all, home ties are home ties! [*Polishing his hat with his sleeve.*] And, taking one consideration with another—and after this—this occurrence—it's my intention for the future—my firm intention——

LILY.

[*Running to ROPER and throwing her arms around his neck.*] Oh, Uncle Lal, not altogether! We're tired and cross this morning! Not altogether!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Behind the centre table.*] No, no, Uncle, you mustn't——!

LILY.

[*To ROPER.*] Forgive us! [*Coaxingly.*] Mother and Jimmie are cats——!

MRS. UPJOHN AND JIMMIE.

Oh——!

[*The door on the left opens, and GLADYS enters with a card on a salver.*

GLADYS.

[*Advancing to LILY.*] Are you in?

LILY.

In?

GLADYS.

[*Surveying LILY with mingled disdain and pity.*] Oh you *do* look washed out!

LILY.

[*Going to GLADYS.*] Never you mind whether I look washed out or not. Who is it?

[*LILY takes the card, reads some writing upon it, and stands twiddling the card in her fingers.*

GLADYS.

They're in the dining-room.

LILY.

[To GLADYS, after a pause.] W-wait outside—on the landing.

GLADYS.

Oh, all right. *This won't get my silver cleaned.*

[GLADYS withdraws. LILY waits for the door to close and then walks about distractedly.]

LILY.

Oh, why can't they leave me alone! What do they want with me now, both of them!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[Moving towards LILY.] 'Oo——?

LILY.

Nicko's downstairs—with Lord Farncombe.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Lord Farncombe——!

ROPER.

And Jeyes!

LILY.

[Reading the card again.] Nicko asks me to see him and the boy together. [ROPER and MRS. UPJOHN go to LILY, one on each side of her, and try to read the

card. *She pushes them from her and sits in the arm-chair by the centre table.*] I won't; I won't.

JIMMIE.

[*Joining Mrs. UPJOHN and ROPER.*] Yes, yes, Lil; do.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Bewildered.*] Wot——?

JIMMIE.

Perhaps they've arrived at a friendly understanding——!

ROPER.

Understanding?

JIMMIE.

[*Excitedly.*] And have come to propose that Lil should choose between them!

ROPER.

Great Scot——!

LILY.

I *have* chosen; I *have* chosen. It's settled.

ROPER.

Undoubtedly she ought to see them.

LILY.

It's a shame to persecute me so—a shame!

JIMMIE, MRS. UPJOHN, AND ROPER.

[*Behind LILY's chair.*] Lil! Lily——!

MRS. UPJOHN.

Give 'em a minute, dear.

ROPER.

Hear what they've got to *say*.

JIMMIE.

It *would* be uncivil *not* to.

LILY.

Oh—! Oh——!

JIMMIE.

Buck up, Lil!

ROPER.

My pet!

MRS. UPJOHN.

'Ark to reason, dearie.

} [*To LILY,*
 urgently.]

JIMMIE, MRS. UPJOHN, AND ROPER.

Lil! Lily——!

LILY.

[*Yielding helplessly.*] Oh, very well——

JIMMIE, MRS. UPJOHN, AND ROPER.

Ah——!

LILY.

Tell Gladys—when I ring——

JIMMIE.

[*Flying to the door on the left.*] I'll tell her.

ROPER.

[*To MRS. UPJOHN, importantly.*] Lucky I was on the spot; lucky I was on the spot.

JIMMIE.

[*On the landing, to GLADYS.*] Bring the gentlemen up when Miss Lily rings.

LILY.

[*Rising and pacing the room on the right.*] Give me some stockings!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Hurrying into the bedroom.*] Yes, dearie. [*As she disappears.*] Maud——!

JIMMIE.

[*Returning and closing the door and then whispering to ROPER.*] Bet my boots that's it!

ROPER.

[*To JIMMIE, in a whisper.*] Choose between 'em!

JIMMIE.

What else can it be?

ROPER.

I can't——

JIMMIE.

[*Throwing herself into ROPER's arms.*] Oh, if it is!

ROPER.

[*Hugging her.*] Oh——!

JIMMIE.

[*Suddenly, releasing herself.*] Oh——! [*Haughtily.*]
Thought you were Lily.

[*MRS. UPJOHN returns, carrying a pair of stockings. LILY seats herself upon the fauteuil-stool where, concealed by the centre table, she draws on the stockings with MRS. UPJOHN'S assistance.*]

LILY.

[*Whimpering.*] Oh—! Oh——!

MRS. UPJOHN.

Don't, dearie; don't. Mother's 'ere.

ROPER.

[*Impatiently.*] I—ah—I think I'll run downstairs and shake hands with Jeyes and Farncombe while Lily's tidying herself.

JIMMIE.

[*Who has moved over to the right—to ROPER.*] Be careful. I should advise you not to risk it.

ROPER.

[*At the door.*] Risk it?

JIMMIE.

If Nicko knows you were the cause of his being

shut out of the party last night, he'll simply throttle you.

ROPER.

[*Opening the door.*] Throttle me! [*Formidably.*]
Throttle Lal Roper——!

[*He disappears, closing the door, as MAUD enters from the bedroom with a pair of shoes.*]

LILY.

[*Weakly.*] Oh! Oh! Oh! Get me something to keep these up with.

JIMMIE.

[*To MAUD.*] Ribbon——

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Snatching the shoes from MAUD.*] Ribbon.

[*MAUD opens one of the drawers underneath the further cupboard on the left and finds a roll of bright, new ribbon, while JIMMIE, searching among the objects on the centre table, discovers the case of manicure instruments and takes from it a pair of scissors.*]

LILY.

[*Putting on her shoes—to MRS. UPJOHN.*] No, no; that's the left foot—oh——!

MRS. UPJOHN.

Don't agitate yourself, dearie. Mother's 'ere.

[*MAUD comes to the centre table with the ribbon and JIMMIE cuts off two lengths from the roll.*]

MAUD.

[To JIMMIE.] Morning, Miss Jimmie!

JIMMIE.

[To MAUD.] Morning!

LILY.

[To MRS. UPJOHN.] Where's the mirror? Where's the mirror?

MRS. UPJOHN.

[Taking the mirror from the table and giving it to LILY.] 'Ere it is, dearie; 'ere it is. An' I'm 'ere too.

LILY.

[Viewing herself in the mirror and running her hand over her hair.] Oh, how horrid I look! [JIMMIE goes to LILY with the two lengths of ribbon and MAUD replaces the roll in the drawer.] Ring the bell. [JIMMIE hands LILY the garters, relieving her of the mirror, and MRS. UPJOHN hastens to the fireplace and presses the bell-push continuously.] That'll do, Maud; you hook it.

MAUD.

[Going to the bedroom door.] Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho! That's how I like to hear her talk. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

[MAUD vanishes into the bedroom, closing the door, and LILY, having tied up her stockings, rises and comes to the settee.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Still pressing the bell-push.*] Now I don't believe I've rung.

LILY.

[*At the uttermost tension.*] Ah, stop it, mother; stop it! [*Sitting on the settee.*] We're not calling the fire-brigade.

JIMMIE.

[*At the back of the settee, to LILY.*] I'll wait in your bedroom till the men have been shown up, and sneak out that way. [*Bending over LILY.*] Mind! If Nicko is willing, after all, that you should make your choice——

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Advancing.*] Yes, dearie, if 'e is willing——

LILY.

[*Frantically.*] I tell you I *have* made it. I keep on telling you *I've chosen—I've chosen—I've chosen!* [*Clenching her hands.*] If you torment me any more, either of you——!

[*MRS. UPJOHN and JIMMIE retreat precipitately to the bedroom door. They open the door and then, standing in the doorway, listen intently.*]

JIMMIE.

[*Disappearing.*] Ah——!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Partially disappearing.*] Ah——! [*Only her head*

visible, speaking to LILY in a hoarse whisper.] Mother's 'ere, dearie.

[*The head is withdrawn and the door softly closed. After a pause, GLADYS enters at the other door followed by JEYES and FARNCOMBE. The men are carrying their hats and canes. GLADYS retires, closing the door, and JEYES comes to LILY and shakes hands with her.*]

JEYES.

[*To LILY, gently.*] How are you to-day, Lil? Very fagged?

LILY.

[*Almost inaudibly.*] I am a little. [JEYES turns from her, to lay his hat and cane upon the box-ottoman, and then FARNCOMBE, who has hung back, advances hesitatingly to the further side of the centre table and bows to LILY. She rises and, avoiding his eyes, gives him a limp hand across the table.] How d'ye do? [*To JEYES who, having got rid of his hat and cane, moves away from the ottoman.*] Sit down, won't you? [*She resumes her seat upon the settee and JEYES, with a nod, sits in the arm-chair by the centre table. FARNCOMBE remains standing and again she addresses him without meeting his eyes.*] And you?

[FARNCOMBE, with another bow, sits upon the fauteuil-stool. There is a brief silence and then JEYES speaks.]

JEYES.

Lil——

LILY.

Y-yes?

JEYES.

In the first place, Farncombe wants you distinctly to understand how it is he's committing this breach of his compact with you. [*To FARNCOMBE.*] You promised——?

FARNCOMBE.

I promised never to attempt to come near Miss Parradell again, nor even to enter the theatre.

JEYES.

[*To LILY.*] And if I'm any judge of a man, Lily, Farncombe would have kept his promise. He'd have kept it faithfully, but for *me*. I've brought him along—insisted on it. [*Emphatically.*] *I've brought him along.* See?

LILY.

W-w-why, Nicko?

JEYES.

I'll tell you, my dear. You remember, when we left you early this morning, ordering us to walk away together and to part good friends?

LILY.

P-perfectly.

JEYES.

Well, we did walk away together, and we did part good friends. But we didn't part at all till some hours later, in his rooms. We didn't part till I'd made

him stand by me and listen to me while I had a long jaw with my brother on the 'phone.

LILY.

[*Wonderingly.*] With—your——?

JEYES.

About that Rhodesian business.

LILY.

What Rhodesian business?

JEYES.

I mentioned it to you yesterday. Bob owns a third, with Peter Chalmers and Tom Dalby, of a group of farms near Bulawayo, and he's been badgering me eternally to cut this and to settle out there as their agent. [*Simply.*] And I've accepted, old girl.

LILY.

[*With a blank face.*] Ac-cepted?

JEYES.

[*Grimly.*] Leaving you to bring an action against me, to recover damages for a broken heart. [*Drawing a deep breath.*] Yes, I'm chucking you, Lil. I give you formal notice of my intention; and you can drive down to your solicitors this afternoon and instruct them to writ me without delay. [*Forcing a laugh.*] Ha, ha, ha!

LILY.

[*Faintly.*] Nicko——!

JEYES.

Unless—unless you've an idea of consoling yourself shortly with—with another chap, and prefer not to carry the matter into Court.

LILY.

[*About to rise.*] Nicko——!

JEYES.

[*Restraining her by a gesture.*] H'sh! No, no, no. [*She sinks back.*] Ah, Lil—Lil—I know you're full of generous, honest impulses, though I *did* tear you to rags in Farncombe's hearing a few hours ago. But I'm not going to allow you to sacrifice yourself to them; I—I—I've come to my senses, and I'm not going to permit it. [*Bending forward.*] Oh, my dear, why should I make you pay for the weaknesses of my character? Because that's what it 'ud amount to. I've bullied you for having played skittles with my life, my career. So you *have!* Damn it, so you have! But you've done it out of blind thoughtlessness; and if I'd been a fairly strong man, with some ballast in me, you *couldn't* have landed me where I am—not you nor fifty Pandora girls! [*Sitting erect.*] And that—that's the moral of the tale; and—and—[*abruptly, to FARNCOMBE*] There's nothing more, is there, Farncombe?

FARNCOMBE.

[*Brokenly.*] Except that—that I'd like to repeat—what I've already said to Jeyes—that I—[*his elbows on the table, his head bowed*] oh, you make me feel terribly small, Jeyes.

[*Again there is a pause, and then LILY struggles to her feet and holds out her hand to JEYES uncertainly, and at once he rises and takes her in his arms. FARNCOMBE also rises and, standing behind the settee, turns his back to JEYES and LILY.*

LILY.

[*To JEYES, choking.*] Ah, Nicko—I can't—I can't—

JEYES.

[*Patting her shoulder.*] Ah——!

LILY.

Why, what—what would become of my resolutions——?

JEYES.

Resolutions?

LILY.

To—to raise you *up*, Nicko.

JEYES.

You *are* raising me up—setting me on my legs again.

LILY.

[*In a fright.*] And—and drawing Eddie into my net!

JEYES.

Oh, we've talked of that too, he and I. He's given me an account of what passed between you here. My dear girl, your conscience may be quite clear on that

point. Nobody can ever reproach *you* with trying to draw him into your net.

LILY.

They *would*—they *would*—

JEYES.

At all events, the task you have to face now is to prove to the world—*his* world—that Miss Parradell is equal to playing "lead" on a bigger stage than the stage of the Pandora. [*Holding her at arms' length and shaking her fondly.*] And you'll do it! Ho, ho, ho, ho! You'll do it! Ha, ha, ha—! [*His voice dies away miserably and he releases her. Then, pulling himself together, he looks at his watch.*] Well, I've got to lunch with Bob at half-past one at the Junior Carlton—

LILY.

[*Agitatedly.*] Ah, it's not nearly that, Nicko; it's not nearly that! Nicko—! [*She passes him, moving towards the door on the left as if to intercept him, and then turns to him. A strip of ribbon lies upon the spot where she has been standing. After gazing at it for a moment, he stoops and picks it up.*] Oh—! [*He folds the ribbon carefully and puts it into his pocket.*] Oh—! [*Hitching up her stocking through her robe, piteously.*] Ha, ha!

JEYES.

Ha, ha, ha—!

[*They face one another, laughing, and then she sits upon the fauteuil-stool and drops her*

head upon the table and he fetches his hat and cane from the box-ottoman.

LILY.

[*Weeping.*] Nicko—Nicko——!

JEYES.

[*Coming to her.*] Oh, this isn't good-bye, Lil, not by any manner o' means, my dear. We'll kill the fatted calf several times before I start—you, I, and the boy. Besides, by-and-by, you and he must take a trip and come out to see me. "Seringa Vale" is the farm where I shall be quartered, Bob tells me. [*Looking into space.*] Jermyn Street to Seringa Vale! [*Shaking himself.*] Ph'h, there are no great distances in these days! [*To FARNCOMBE, with a change of tone.*] Farncombe—[*FARNCOMBE comes forward.*] You dine with me to-night, recollect; it's an engagement.

FARNCOMBE.

Yes.

JEYES.

Eight o'clock.

FARNCOMBE.

Eight o'clock.

JEYES.

Catani's.

FARNCOMBE.

Catani's.

[*Without looking at LILY again, JEYES goes to the door and opens it. FARNCOMBE follows him and the two men halt in the doorway.*

JEYES.

[*To FARNCOMBE, with a motion of his head towards LILY.*] And afterwards—you fetch her from the theatre and take her home. That's *your* job.

LILY.

[*Rising.*] Oh——!

[*FARNCOMBE goes out on to the landing with JEYES and parts from him at the top of the stairs. Then FARNCOMBE slowly returns, closes the door, and finds LILY sitting upon the settee in a woeful attitude.*

FARNCOMBE.

[*Coming to LILY and standing before her, thoughtfully.*] Lily——

LILY.

[*Feebly.*] Eh—eh——?

FARNCOMBE.

I'm afraid there's one thing finer than winning the woman you love and, when you've won her, being prepared to go through fire and water for her.

LILY.

What's that?

FARNCOMBE.

Having the courage to give her up, as Jeyes has done.

LILY.

[*With a renewed outburst.*] Oh, Nicko! Poor Nicko! Poor Nicko!

FARNCOMBE.

[*Sitting beside her and taking her hand consolingly.*] By George, he's a brick, isn't he!

LILY.

[*After a pause, drying her eyes.*] Eddie——

FARNCOMBE.

Yes?

LILY.

If—if ever we marry——

FARNCOMBE.

[*His jaw falling.*] If——!

LILY.

W-w-when, then. When we marry, you'll be obliged to resign your commission in the Guards, won't you?

FARNCOMBE.

[*Snapping his fingers.*] P'sh! I shan't care a rap about that.

LILY.

[*Snatching her hand away.*] The snobs! The snobs! They'd let you marry any bit of trash in your own set; but a Pandora girl, though she's as pure as the Queen of England——! Oh, the contemptible snobs!

FARNCOMBE.

[*Regaining possession of her hand.*] H'sh! H'sh!
It—it's the practice——

LILY.

Blow the practice! A cheerful reflection for *me*,
it'll be. The arrant snobs!

FARNCOMBE.

[*Stroking her hand.*] Ah! Ah!

LILY.

And then—poor mother! You—you won't be
very proud of poor mother.

FARNCOMBE.

Your mother? [*Boyishly.*] Oh, she—she's an
awfully good sort.

LILY.

She hasn't an H. to her name.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Inadvertently.*] She *oughtn't* to have.

LILY.

[*Withdrawing her hand again, sharply.*] She calls
herself *Hupjohn*, you mean!

FARNCOMBE.

[*Distressed.*] No, no, no. [*In a difficulty.*] Er—at
any rate, h's don't lead you to heaven, do they?

LILY.

[*Gloomily.*] You're right; mother's lead *her* to 'eaven. [*Rising and walking away.*] Well, you'd better go now.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Rising.*] And to-night——?

LILY.

No; I'll come home alone.

FARNCOMBE.

Lily——!

LILY.

[*Imperatively.*] Please——!

FARNCOMBE.

When——?

LILY.

[*Moving to the door on the left.*] Not for two or three days. Give me time to shake down over this.

FARNCOMBE.

[*Taking up his hat and cane which he has left upon the centre table.*] Sunday?

LILY.

[*Fretfully.*] No.

FARNCOMBE.

Monday?

LILY.

[*Opening the door.*] No.

FARNCOMBE.

[Joining her at the door.] Tuesday ?

LILY.

[Appealingly.] I—I'll write. [Again he takes her hand, she keeping him at a distance. He attempts to lessen the distance, but she checks him, shaking her head.] Not just yet, Eddie. [He smiles at her tenderly and, with a bow, departs. From the doorway, she watches him disappear; then she shuts the door and wanders listlessly to the door of the bedroom. Her hand lingers upon the knob for a moment, and then she opens the door a little way and calls.] Mother! Mother——!

[She leaves the door and is returning to the settee when MRS. UPJOHN enters.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[All agog.] Yes, Lil? [LILY seats herself upon the settee without speaking.] Yes, dearie; yes? [Advancing to the centre table.] 'Ave they given you your choice?

LILY.

[Dully.] No; they've given me no choice.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[Advancing further.] Wot——?

LILY.

Nicko's going out to South Africa, mother.

MRS. UPJOHN.

South Africa!

LILY.

Well, to Rhodesia.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Then you're free, Lil!

LILY.

No, I'm not.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Not!

LILY.

Nicko—Nicko's handed me over, mother.

MRS. UPJOHN.

'Aanded you over!

LILY.

To—to Lord Farncombe.

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Gasping.*] An' you an' the young gentleman——!

LILY.

I—I suppose so.

MRS. UPJOHN.

Oh—! [*Sinking into the arm-chair by the centre table.*]
Oh, the dear Captain!

LILY.

[*Transferring herself from the settee to MRS. UPJOHN'S lap.*] Oh! Oh! Oh! [*Putting her arms round MRS. UPJOHN'S neck.*] Oh, poor Nicko!

MRS. UPJOHN.

[*Soothingly.*] 'E'll 'ave 'is reward, Lil; 'e'll 'ave 'is reward 'ereafter.

LILY.

And poor Carlton Smythe! Oh, poor Carlton!

MRS. UPJOHN.

Poor Carlton——?

LILY.

He's losing every one of his best girls, mother. Gwennie Harker—Maidie Trevail—Eva Shafto—and now *me!* Oh, poor Carlton!

MRS. UPJOHN.

'Ush, dearie; 'ush! Don't consider 'im! [*Rocking LILY to and fro like a baby.*] 'Think—think wot a lot o' good you're all doin' to the aristocracy!

[*The door on the left opens and JIMMIE and ROPER look in gleefully and then tiptoe towards LILY and MRS. UPJOHN.*]

THE END.

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